

A MARVEL MONTHLY

THE MAGAZINE OF CINEMA & TELEVISION FANTASY N°32 60p/\$2.00

# STARBURST

## SUPERMAN II - THE REVIEW



INSIDE THE MONSTER CLUB

WE TAKE A LOOK AT THE ACTORS ON A NIGHT OF HORROR

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TO BE WON IN  
OUR GRAND**

**MONSTER CLUB COMPETITION**

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**BLAKE'S 7's JACQUELINE PEARCE**

AN INTERVIEW WITH TV'S FAVOURITE VILLAINESS

**PLUS** FEATURES ON BLOOD BEACH,  
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PHILIP JOSÉ FARMER & DOUGLAS ADAMS



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A Marvel Comics Production

# STARBURST LETTERS

## A VIEW FROM THE U.S.

I have just received and read issues 20 - 26 of your magazine, and I thought that I might give some impressions of your magazine from someone on this side of the puddle. Here goes.

I enjoy your magazine very much, as it presents a lot of material that we do not see over here, as the other magazines have not yet gotten around to covering them. It is difficult to cover these things, as much of the current crop of magazines is devoted to new information, and since several things premiere in this country at the same time, it is difficult not to cover them and cover some of the classic material as well. My compliments to you folks.

I also enjoy the photographs that your magazine contains, however, I am saddened by the lack of colour (I know it costs a lot to produce, but it is worth it). It is rather irritating to see beautiful colour transparencies issued in black and white.

One thing that I have noticed about your magazine, that is extremely irritating, is the large amount of anti-American sentiment from the magazine, as well as the readers. For people who claim to be fairly open-minded find this obvious bigotry just a little out of character.

Now, on to an issue by issue review.

**Starburst 20:** I could not believe that your coverage of the Fantasy Females did not include any mention at all of Jenny Agutter from *Logan's Run*. Ms Agutter is quite a good actress, end more than adequately qualifies to appear in the *Fantasy Females* section.

**Starburst 21:** I see that the great *Star Trek* question lives on in your country as well as in mine. Most of us view the picture as a poor attempt at making *Star Trek* into a movie. Many of the true hard core *Trek* fans that I know are admitting that there are several flaws in the picture, but many still believe it to be a wonderful show. I applaud Mr

## GOOD MORNING, AMERICA!

Now that *Starburst* is officially available to American fans of fantastic films, perhaps a few introductory words are in order.

*Starburst* is a British magazine devoted to critical coverage of the fields of science fiction, horror and fantasy in television and cinema. The letter from Mark Marmor and its reply on this page explain where *Starburst* stands with regard to the reviews it gives movies and tv shows, while our behind-the-scenes reports, interviews and retrospectives should need no explaining. It's Only a Movie by John Brosnan, TV Zone by Tise Vahimagi and Book World by John Bowles are regular columns on the three main media. All adopt a critical thought-provoking stance and we look forward to your reactions to each. While uncompromising criticism plays a major role in the *Starburst* philosophy we always reserve a section of our letters column for the opinions of readers who feel obliged to make their views heard. If we say something you don't like, tell us! And you could always let us know when you agree with what we say, as well!

Future issues of *Starburst* will give in-depth coverage to such fantasy movies as *Scanners*, *Incredible Shrinking Woman*, 2001: A Space Odyssey, *Snow White* and the Seven Dwarfs, *Altered States*, *Outland*, *Conan*, *Them* and *Dragon-slayer*. We also have on file interviews with Margot Kidder, Hammer make-up wizard Roy Ashton, model-maker Martin Bower and *Doctor Who* writer Terrence Dicks.

But the big news is that, as of issue 35 of *Starburst*, we will be increasing the number of pages. That's right, we are a mere three issues away from an additional eight pages of colour in *Starburst*. Even more interesting, Marvel comics editor Paul Neary, well known for his work at Warren magazines, will be filling two of those eight pages with a brand new full-colour satirical science fiction comic strip. The title is under wraps right now, but suffice it to say that over the months more than a few famous faces from tv and cinema fantasy will be making guest appearances.

But in the meantime, enjoy *Starburst* 32. And we hope to see you here again next month.

Alan McKenzie, Editor.

Brosnan for his honesty.

I found what I think to be a grievous error on the part of your research people, in regards to *Battlestar Galactica*, and *Mission Galactica*: The *Cylon Attack Galactica* is not a compilation of 3 hours of television scripts. It was originally set to be a science fiction film, with a possibility of several sequels (something like the *James Bond* films). It was later decided to adapt the show to television, and the movie is expanded to cover 3 hours worth of air time. *Mission* is a compilation of the 2 episodes of the *Living Legend* episode, and some bits from another episode whose

title escapes me (we call it the *Towering Inferno* episode, by way of a nickname). It is not a truly bad compilation, but might have been better if it was done as a theatrical movie instead of 3 episodes thrown together. I enjoyed both films immensely. **Starburst 22:** I take a special offence to the writer (I won't use names for obvious reasons) who commented about how often *Star Trek* is repeated, but other more valuable shows like *Blake's 7* and *Space: 1999* go wanting for recognition. Since I have not seen *Blake's 7* (I have read the first 2 books), I cannot comment on it. However, I have seen *Space: 1999*



through several reruns here in the states. Although *Space* is reputedly made for American audiences, this so-called "mindless American pap" suffered here due to the crass stupidity of the series, and received no superstar status befitting a supposedly tailored show. The acting in the show is in many cases stiffer than the puppets in other Gerry Anderson productions, and the only saving graces of the show are its costumes and effects. Also, *Star Trek* does hold a bit more value to us, as it is a major ground breaking show which set many television precedents, and has held up extremely well, regardless of the age of the show.

**Starburst 23:** I have read many things that could be called damning with faint praise, but John Brosnan's review is the most classic case. Does he like *Star Trek* 3 (does he like anything?)

Mr Brosnan's review of *Empire Strikes Back* leaves me with grave doubts about his taste. In all the reviews that I have read, there does not seem to be anything in the world that will satisfy him. Or does he just dislike American films (defined as any film instigated and executed by Americans, with or without the help of others).

**Starburst 24:** This is the issue I really have a few bones to pick with. I have rarely read a magazine that slanders and libels as much as this reply to a letter does. American magazines have printed many, many scalding reviews (see some of the commentary on *Black Hole* and *Star Trek*). I do not think that you





people consider that some people may actually like something in a film, and they are entitled to their opinions. That is the essence of what you were trying to say to that person's letter, but it would be nice if you practiced what you preach. Also, a side line. Many of my friends write for the American magazines that in your snobbish you look down upon. They have had quite a bit of difficulty in the last few years in getting the material that is necessary to writing a good article (ie press releases, photos, transparencies, etc.). It is considered helpful to the situation if you write a decent review (hardly to be called patronizing), so that the movie company does not think that you are biting the hand that feeds you.

In regards to the film *Final Countdown*, it is more of an action and adventure film than a science fiction epic. It is also quite enjoyable. It has mass market appeal, and will probably please a lot of people in the audiences (something a film is supposed to do). I feel that Mr Brosnan's review is extremely out of line, and looks as if it has been lifted almost word for word from an American review.

Well, I have come to an end and with my commentary of the issues of *Starburst* that I have seen. Before I end this letter I would like to say that your columns on classic films are masterpieces, and that your fact articles are truly the best that I have read anywhere. I admit the above issue-by-issue comments were only highlighting the bad points, but I



Above: Especially for Mark Marmor — Jenny Agutter fan par excellence — we present a portrait of Ms Agutter from the less-than-wonderful science fiction movie *Logan's Run*.

would have to write a novel to sing the praises of your good points. Your magazine has found quite a following here (justifiably so) regardless of its high price (£2.50 dollars or about a pound sterling, give or take 10p for world monetary fluctuations). I look forward to continued reading of your magazine.

Mark Marmor,  
 New York,  
 United States.

Your letter raises some interesting points, Mark. However, we feel that you have been less-than-fair with us on several items. To take

your comments one-by-one:

**Starburst 20:** Many actresses were missed out from our *Fantasy Females* coverage. But we are planning a sequel soon, and we have to have a few pictures left over, hmmm? Nevertheless, we are printing a picture of Ms Agutter just for you. Fair enough?

**Starburst 21:** It is noted that you enjoyed the *Batdeter* films. This is important for a later point.

**Starburst 22:** C'mon, don't be shy. Of course you can mention the name of the chap who wrote the letter. It's David Gibson. But he didn't call *Space:1999* "Mindless American pop." He said that the independent tv stations in

Britain would rather screen said pop than *Space:1999*.

**Starburst 23:** John Brosnan has come in for some unfair criticism from readers who decide that John hates a film then pillory him for it. For the last time, John liked both *Saturn 3* and *Empire*. That doesn't mean he has to be blind to their faults. And they both had faults.

**Starburst 24:** This is your most unfair criticism, Mark. For the benefit of readers who missed issue 24, the letter in question stated that we "had no right" to criticise *Mission Galactica* (see "Starburst 21" above). Britain, like the United States, is a free country. We have freedom of speech, just as our readers do.

I concede that US sf film magazines do occasionally print critical reviews, but they always include an editorial disclaimer. But the strange views you hold concerning the supply of material from the film companies and the muzzling of film critics are a little frightening.

However, all defensiveness aside, I'm glad you enjoy *Starburst* for the most part. We try very hard to give our readers a magazine that is thought-provoking and honestly critical. And now that *Starburst* is more readily available in the United States, through the specialist shops, we look forward to hearing from our American readers.

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# THINGS TO COME

## AS YOU WERE!

Apologies to all concerned, or indeed unconcerned. I wuz wrong about John Philip Law being Tarzan to Bo Derek's Jane in the re-tread of Tarzan, *The Apa Man*. A gent named of Lea Cannalito is wearing the suede Y-fronts on location just now on Arthur C. Clarke's turf in Sri Lanka. Must admit, I always thought John Phillip Law was too skinny for the part. He's still in the movie, one of the (light) heavies along with burlier Richard Harris. The director? Oh, what is his name . . . such a charming fellow, always has a kind word for the Press, never known to have chuckled any reporters out his hotel door or anything as discourteous as that. Ah yes, that's it! John Derek. Without doubt, he qualifies as the heaviest heavy around beautiful Bo.

## CLOSER ENCOUNTERS

The film we all dearly wished the revised *Closa Encounters* was going to be is coming about anyway. Contact is about the first human contact with extraterrestrial life. It's written by Carl Sagan, the US tube's new media superstar from his *Cosmos* series. New York publishers, Simon and Schuster, have just offered Sagan more than 2 million dollars for the book rights — the highest deal in publishing history in the United States. The film, though, is already deep in preparation. Sagan's book (from whoever wins the publishing rights, for the battle is not yet over) is due out next year. But the movie (based on a treatment by Sagan and Ann Druyan) won't make it until 1983, according to Polygram Pictures. The delay? The effects, of course. Carl Sagan's own company (which apparently helped put Viking on Mars, by the way) is co-producing the film, which has been lovingly described as an H.G. Wells-like "combination of science fact and fiction". (I thought Wells was all fiction, most of which *became* fact). Sagan's current book, based on his *Cosmos* series, has been No 1 in the US charts for, oh, ages!

## FRENCH ENCOUNTERS

The French should have a closest encounter out first, however. Top Paris movie-maker Claude Chabrol is hoping to recover from the huge flop of his excellent *Horse of Pride* last year, with his new one, *Eight Days Elsewhere*. This, says Claude, is based on a true happening. About a young man who claims to have been kidnapped by the pilots of a flying saucer for eight days . . .

*Encroyable — mais vrai!*

## REAL CHINA I

John Carpenter never did make his *China Syndrome*-for-real thriller, *The Prometheus Crisis*. But again that kind of story — the aftermath of a real nuclear plant's melt-down disaster — is being made, anyway. For the American tube and Euro-cinemas. *Evacuata Now* is written by Dan Ohlmeyer, a familiar name in US tv circles, but usually more associated with top sports programmes. According to Dan, Den the sporting man, *Evacuata Now* tells "what would happen to a community with an inadequate evacuation plan if a nuclear reactor accident caused a massive leak of radioactivity." Die, I guess.

## REAL CHINA II

Meanwhile, George Braunstein, the producer with *Prometheus* stuck on his shelf, tells me that the project could still happen — and this year. He has John Carpenter's script and is shopping around for a chiller (mede with his partner Ron Hamady), he feels this shouldn't be too difficult a job. I wish him well. He's been working on the film since 1977. If he has to wait much longer, I can see that the film won't be science fiction at all — such a disaster will have already happened someplace.

## BUCK'S TREK

Something new has happened to Buck Rogers on the American tube. Well, something old, to be precise. Buck Rogers is slowly turning into *Star Trek* or worse,

## BOND DISCS

All eleven 007 films are due soon on the RCA Selectavision video disk. (And if you've not tried them, let me tell you they're better than cassettes; cheaper to buy, easier to mail, store and play . . . once you've shelled out £300 or so for the player, of course). Goldfinger, the most popular Bond film on US tv, will be issued first in America followed by all

the rest — from Sean Connery's debut, *Dr No* (1962) to Roger Moore's *Moonraker* (1979), and even George Lezenby's solo offering, *On Her Majesty's Secret Service* . . . when the Aussie model was dubbed by George Baker. So far the 007 series has earned more than 1.5 billion dollars in world cinema takings — so the selling price of all eleven to RCA for 2 million dollars must rate as the steal of the year.



*Battlestar Galactica*, with Gil Gerard and company aboard a starship searching the galaxies for the Lost Tribes of Earth . . . a tele-Earth Search, in fact. Man behind the changes is John Mantley, former executive producer of such shows as *Gunsmoke* and *How the West Was Won*. He's taken over from Glen Larson, who's about to split from Universal and join 20th Century-Fox tv. Mantley's policy for *Buck* is what he terms "people stories". Well, I suppose Gil Gerard can't keep spoofin' it year in and year out (even if 007 can). Gil is still heeding the show, of course. With Erin Gray and Felix Silla's robot also remaining firm. New regulars include Jay Garner, Wilfrid Hyde-White (very much out of place as a terribly English scientist) and best of all, Thom Christopher as Buck's Spock — Hawk, a bird-man, or a man-bird, whichever you prefer. He's about as daffy a sight as *Flesh Gordon's* Vultan, Brien Blessed, in his

feathery outfit, but Thom masterfully overcomes the make-up and makes a very credible character. He also has Barbara Luna as his lady-bird . . .

## RAY'S REMAKE

Meanwhile, the big daddy of all the alien visitation numbers is about to be re-made . . .

Ray Bradbury, very busy in films and tv this year, is scripting the re-tread of Robert Wise's 1951 classic, *The Day the Earth Stood Still*. And I hear that Wise may re-make it himself.



# Compiled by Tony Crawley

## DISNEY DOWN

Hurt by the less than stratospheric business of *The Black Hole* (which earned 25 million dollars in America on a 20-million budget), the Disney studio is to spend less on movies this year. A full 13-million dollars less, in fact. Most of this saving looks like being spent on a bunch of new tv series instead, including a show about two private eyes who shrink before your very eyes to six inches high. They're called, wait for it, *Small & Fry*. Ouch!

Other tv series include *Once Upon A Mouse*, a 20-minute potted history of Disney animation (20 minutes?) and *The Wizards of WED*, viewing the work of the designers of Disneyland, Disney World (ten years old in October), Tokyo Disneyland (opening in October 1983) and the gargantuan 800-million dollar EPCOT centre, of Environmental Prototype Community of Tomorrow, due to open on time next year.

## DISNEY UP

The Disney film plans are looking good, all the same. Top of the year's projects is a *Fantasia*-like look at the life and times (end genius) of Albert Einstein – to be



Above: Actor Richard Dreyfuss is to portray Albert Einstein in a Disney biopic which depicts the life and times of the great scientist. Below: Corman's *Deathrace 2000* will soon be available Stateside on Warners Home Video cassettes.



played by the *Close Encounters* star, Richard Dreyfuss. Kirk Douglas returns to where he made

*20,000 Leagues Under the Sea* in 1954, to produce Ray Bradbury's *Something Wicked This Way*

Comes. Rey has scripted his novel himself. Unfortunately Kirk's son Peter will co-produce. 'Twas Peter who brought *The Final Countdown* upon us. And Disney are not through with sf just yet. Producer Donald Kushner is in charge of their next entry in the spec field, *Tren*, a 10-million dollar project which Animapymis director Steven Lisberger starts shooting on April 13, from a script he's written with Bonnie McBird and David Rimmer. It's a ten-week shoot, then Harrison Ellenshaw takes over for the effects. These will involve all departments of the studio, animators included. Ellenshaw's toil should take about a full year – with the *Tren* premiere being pencilled in for the summer of '82. For now.

## CORMAN CASSETTES

Jolly Roger Corman's New World Pictures has struck a deal for its films to be sold on the Warner Home Video cassettes in the States. The first group of titles include sheer Cormanica like *Monster*, *Big Bad Mama*, and *Death Race 2000*, plus his more prestigious American releases from Ingmar Bergman, Fellini and Truffaut.

## CRAVEN IMAGES

Latest horror exploiter to be taken up by the major Hollywood studios, is Wes Craven. He who chilled our very marrow with *The Last House on the Left* and *The Hills Have Eyes*. Those were huge *el cheapo* winners, made for less than taking his unit to lunch at McDonalds. The films were both shot in 16mm and blown up to 35mm. *Last House* cost a mere 70,000 dollars in 1971, with *Hills* being inflated only to 250,000 dollars six years later. Such financial control has won Hollywood's interest, of course. Even so, it's taking two companies, Polygram and Universal, to pay for Craven's big time entry – *Deadly Blessing* – just completed in Dallas. It's about a young widow pursued by "unknown



Ernest Borgnine (above) and Maren Jensen (right) in Wes Craven's *Deadly Blessing*.



forces", it says here, after the murder of her husband, a member of some weirdo religious sect. The lady in distress is played by Maren Jensen, *Batdstar Galectica's* *Athena*. Also cast: *Ernie Borgnine* and *Jeff East*, the young Superman.

More up our street, Craven has now begun *The Swamp Thing* for Avco Embassy, the current home base of Carpenter, Cronenberg, Joe Dante, *et al*. This one, but of course, stems from the DC comic by Len Wein and Berni Wrightson which had this young scientist, Alex Holland, messing about with plant-growing experiments, until he starts turning into a plant himself. "It's really *Beauty and the Beast*," says Craven, "for his girl continues to love him in his monstrous condition." Maybe she has green fingers.

# THINGS TO COME

## BLONDIE FANTASY

Blondie chanteuse Debbia Harry — due to have been Princess Aura in Nic Roeg's *Flash Gordon* — is getting into the fantasy business, all the same. She won't (alas) be seen, only heard singing on the soundtrack of Canada's animation space movie, *Drets*. Also soundtracking it are Lou Reed, Earth, Wind and Fire and some group called Cheap Trick... which the film ain't at 5.5 million dollars of Toronto loot.

## MONSTER FLOP

Frankenstein tried to do a *Dracula* on the Broadway stage in January. It was a lavish, gimmicky, electronic-effects riddled 2-million dollar theatrical version of Mary Shelley — with 20th Century-Fox among the backers. Director Tom Moore was in charge of what was called a Victor Gialanella script (no mention of poor Ms Shelley), with David Dukes as the eleventh hour replacement for a sacked William Converse Roberts as Victor Frankenstein and Keith Jochim as the creature — with John Carradine turning up as the blind hermit. Opening night at the Palace Theatre, New York, was Sunday, January 4. So was the closing night! The play was off almost before the rotten reviews came out — and constitutes Broadway's most expensive flop ever. Co-producer Joseph Innes must be getting used to this. It was his fourth epic flop in a row. Bren Farren's effects were to say the least of it, overdue — foggy mists enveloped the entire cast, sound effects were too loud, etc. The play might have had a chance to become a *Dracula*-like hit, if the production had been rather more tempered with reason — and indeed won the Frankenstein the backers wanted — Len Gariou, the original star of *Sweeney Todd*. Too late now...

## MONSTER SMASH

Sleepy-eyed were the students of an Oregon campus when they went to class the other week.

They had just lived through the sixth annual Science Fiction Marathon at the Case Western Reserve University — 28 hours of some sixteen movies... Plus shorts and cartoons to help people take a hike, have a bite or simply go for a look. Jaff Johnson, a sophomore student of astronomy, arranged this year's screenings including the long (legally) delayed American premiere of Val Guest's *Tomorrow* starring Olivia Newton-John (three of the worst actresses in the history of the business). The movie was made in Britain in 1970 and has barely been seen anywhere, due to various lawsuits, but producer Harry Saltzman (originally one of the two 007 film-makers) was able to spring it for this student fest. Jeff Johnson also netted Cleveland's first screening of *The Black Hole* and *Superman* in 70mm and six track stereo. He'd hoped to do the same with *Star Trek*, but Paramount told him they had the one 70mm copy only and this was not for distribution. One wonders what it is for...

## HIT & MYTH

Charlie Schnear and Ray Harryhausen may have started a new vogue with *Clash of the Titans*. The news from Rome is that Fellini is also getting into the Greek mythology act. He has *Clockwork Orange* author Anthony Burgess working up a script based on *The Illiad*. "Achilles," quoth Fellini, "is a much more spectacular hero than *Flash Gordon*." But then the way Sam Jones mimes him *Rin-Tin-Tin* is a much more spectacular hero than *Flash Gordon*!

Incidentally, I gather from Hollywood that Federico Fellini is being assisted on this project by the sorcerer and his apprentice — Francis Coppola and George Lucas. They're doing for Fellini here what they did for Akira Kurosawa in Japan on *Kagemusha*. Helping to make sure the movie is made. I wouldn't have thought the great Fellini needed such a Hollywoodian leg-up into production, but obviously everything helps.



This page: A selection of scenes from the forthcoming MGM/Harryhausen *Dynamation* epic *Clash of the Titans*.





# THINGS TO COME

## ENTER: JOHNSON

Ken Johnson, creator of such telefantasy trips as *The Six Million Dollar Man*, *The Bionic Woman* (not to mention — please! — the bionic boy and dog), plus *The Incredible Hulk* series, is pulling out of tv — and moving into feature films. After five years as writer-producer-director — at Universal's black tower, he's had enough of the box. And the black tower! He's wasting little time in setting up his movie plans.

His opening project is *The Lower Ring*, not a Raging Bull Meets Rocky picture, but a supernatural thriller, written by Johnson and Justin Edgerton. It's set in, of all the most unlikely places, the Pentagon in Washington. (Maybe that's not so, unlikely, considering the importance of pentagons in many a mystic cult.) His second venture is shrouded in mystery for now, except to say he's written it himself and it will be bankrolled by 20th Century-Fox, which can only bode well. Fox, after all, okayed (altogether now) *Star Wars*, *The Omen*, *Alien*, *Planet of the Apes*, *Fantastic Voyage*, etc.

## EXIT: LUCAS

No vast surprise really, but George Lucas is quitting Hollywood — and London. By August, he'll have transferred his entire Lucasfilm regime from the Northern end of LA up the coast a bit to Northern California, in Marin County, San Francisco. This is where most of his work is already being done from his 3,000-acre Skywalker Ranch. The move from his LA offices — close to Universal studios — means that George loses Charles Weber as company president — he's staying put due to family considerations. Weber will remain a Lucasfilm consultant, but George now takes over as the presidency (today Lucasfilm, tomorrow the White House) as well as being chairman of the board. Earlier on, Lucasfilm UK will be closed — as of March 27, making London manager Caroline Nelson redundant; and in future all George's merchandising and licensing

activities will be run by freelance Andrew Maconia.

Whether this shuttering of his London operation means George won't be using Elstree studios anymore, has not yet been confirmed. I tend to doubt it myself. He is, after all, building himself full film production facilities — a studio, in point of fact — on the Skywalker spread. This won't be ready in time for shooting *Revenge of the Jedi* (special effects work already taking place in San Francisco), but that, surely, will be the last of the *Star Wars* series to be shot in a British studio. The rest will happen more or less on George's back porch. He has the filmmaker's dream. He can simply stroll to work every morning from now on, or pop home to lunch.

## THE ASTRONAUTS

Those Goodie stars Bill Oddie and Graeme Garden have written a new spaced-out comedy series called *The Astronauts* for ATV. The six half-hour shows are being co-produced with Witzend, the production company owned by comedy writers Dick Clement and Ian La Frenais (they created *The Likely Lads*, etc.). Set to star so far, Christopher Godwin and Barrie Rutter, who both appeared in the Witzend feature film of *Partridge*. Female interest is to be supplied by actress Cermen Du Sautory. The series should appear on ITV screens towards the end of this year.

John Fleming

## AND FINALLY...

If and when Editor Allen supplies the required twenty pages for my joyous review of *The Howling* (Just watch out for our upcoming werewolf issue of *Starburst* — Editor) you'll get the message — I loved it! And considering the circumstances I saw it in, that's quite something. I mean, I doubt if even old John Brown has set through a werewolf film next to a critic accompanied by his wolfhound! The critic nodded off. But the pooch loved the movie. At least, I think that's why he snatched the publicity sheet out of my grasp...

## TRIFFID TROUBLE

There have been several changes since our highly popular interview with A.J. "Mitch" Mitchell back in *Starburst* 30. The interview had been conducted while Mitch was still at the BBC, working as a Video Effects man (the term Electronic Effects Operator, Mitch tells me, is highly inaccurate, a fact for which we at *Starburst* apologise profusely). Since the interview took place, however, Mitch has left the BBC to go freelance, toiling away tirelessly on such projects as commercials for the "other side" and pop music promotional films as a Director Cameraman.

It is strange that since the first announcement of the BBC Day of the Triffids project, with ex-Blake's 7 man David Maloney in the producer's seat, creative talent has been deserting the show in droves. First to leave was a

familiar name to *Starburst* readers, Ian Scoones. Ian had fled the hallowed cloisters of Baab for the Hammer House of Horror tv series. Then, right on his heels in November 1980, Mitch headed for pastures new. We apologise for the impression given in the interview that A.J. Mitchell was still at the BBC at the time the interview appeared.

Interestingly, Mitch tells me that his final job with the Beeb was a special trip along with Michael John Harris, BBC's Head of Visual Effects, to Qatar, just 150 miles from where the Iran/Iraq conflict was taking place, for a series of lectures to Gulf programme-makers on the making of — ironically — war movies for the Arab-speaking tv stations. Mitch would like to point out that any later explosions and tank battles were the real thing, and not his effects work!

Alan Mc Kenzie.



Above: A chilling scene from *The Howling*, soon to be reviewed by Tony Crawley in the special Werewolf issue of *Starburst*.

STARBUCKS  
MONSTER CLUB  
COMPETITION  
ENTRY STAMP

# MONSTER COMPETITION



# CLUB TION

It's competition time once again. After a terrific response to our last contest (the *Starburst Sweatshirt* competition in *Starburst* 28) we have had many readers asking when our next would be. It was about the time that those questions started to come in that *Monster Club* producer Milton Subotsky rang the *Starburst* offices. "How would you like to do a *Monster Club* competition?" he asked. The timing couldn't have been better. So here we are!

In conjunction with the film distribution company ITC, Milton has supplied us with ten original masks used in the film, *The Monster Club*, 25 record albums of the film soundtrack and fifty copies of the rare Cannes Film Festival promotional comic with art by John Bolton and David Lloyd.

## THE COMPETITION

The competition couldn't be easier. All you have to do is look at these photos from great monster films and write down, on a post card please, the name of each film, the

name of each monster and the name of the actor playing the monster. But just in case you think you're getting off lightly, we also want you to complete the following sentence: "My favourite monster film is . . . because . . .". The better your answer the better your chances of winning. Don't forget to clip the *Starburst Monster Club Competition Entry Stamp* and attach it to your entry. If you do not include the Entry Stamp, your entry will be disqualified. The competition is open to both British and American readers.

## THE RULES

Entries must be postmarked no later than 23rd April 1981. The competition is open to everyone except employees of Marvel, Comag and ITC. The editor's decision is final and no correspondence can be entered into. Send all entries to *Monster Club Competition*, Marvel Comics Ltd., Jadwin House, 205-211 Kentish Town Road, London NW5, England.





# UP

After many cha  
of the camera)  
Movie is finally with  
the preview a

**A**fter a year of cinematic disappointments — culminating in the dreadful *Flash Gordon* — it comes as a real pleasure to be able to say that *Superman II* is a winner on all counts and is even better than *Superman I*. It shines as a perfect example of how to put a comic strip character on the screen. It doesn't patronise the younger members of its audience, as does *Flash Gordon*, and it treats its super hero star with respect and a reasonably straight face, which is the only approach that works with this sort of movie. There is plenty of humour, of course, but it's of a different kind to that which permeates *Flash Gordon* where the jokes are all desperately sign-posted by writer, director and cast who seem to be anxious to prove to adult members of the audience that they're not really taking any of it seriously.

The main fault with *Superman I* was that it consisted of three entirely different movies. There was the space fantasy section set on Krypton that, while beautiful to look at, was rather slow-moving and ponderous. Then came the elegiac second section with young Clark Kent growing up in rural America. Finally, after a lot of portentous stuff involving the Fortress of Solitude and messages from his dead parents the movie only really got into its stride when the action switched to Metropolis.

With *Superman II* however there is a consistency of style throughout the movie (which is surprising when you consider that some of the sequences were shot years apart). After a brief visual summary of what has gone before we are plunged straight into the action with a spectacular set-piece involving the Eiffel Tower, a bunch of terrorists with a home-made hydrogen bomb, and Lois Lane. For a *James Bond* movie, say, these





# ERMAN II

ges of line-up (both behind and in front  
the long-awaited sequel to *Superman the*  
us. *Starburst* critic John Brosnan was at  
d was very impressed with what he saw.



sequences would have served as an adequate climax, but for *Superman II* it's only the beginning. Are they going to be able to top that, you wonder, or is it going to be all downhill from then on (as was *The Empire Strikes Back* after the ice world section . . .)?

No, one can say with relief, it's not. After the literally explosive beginning the movie keeps the excitement by pitting Superman against three villains who are just as powerful as he is. These are the three Kryptonian criminals, General Zod (*Terence Stamp*), Ursa (*Sarah Douglas*) and Non (*Jack O'Halloran*) who we earlier saw being consigned to the Phantom Zone. Superman unwittingly frees them when he hurls the terrorists' hydrogen bomb into outer space . . .

Superman still has Lex Luthor to worry about as well. He soon escapes from the prison he was sent to at the end of Part I by using a hologram device, fashioned out of bits and pieces, that fools the guards into thinking that he and his henchman Otis (*Ned Beatty*) are still in their cell. (This sequence brought back fond memories of the *Superman* comics of my youth when Luthor was forever getting out of prison by creating amazingly complicated devices out of things like sardine cans and empty match boxes — a prowess that gave me a quite distorted view of scientists and their abilities.)

Luthor is again played by Gene Hackman but the character has been rather toned down from the previous film. The more outrageously camp elements, such as his costumes, have gone (he's now the most conservatively dressed person in the movie). And the roles of his two comical assistants, Otis and Eve (*Valerie Perrine*) have been pared to almost non existence, all of which is a big

improvement. Luthor still gets all the best and funniest lines, and is as big a megalomaniac as ever (this time the price for his services is the entire continent of Australia — "As you know, I have an interest in beach properties," he explains), but doesn't jar with the rest of the move as he tended to do in Part I. This time he works as a kind of dry comic counter-balance to all the straight-faced characters around him.

The three Kryptonian villains are played perfectly straight (apart from some humorous touches with the dumb giant Non) and as a result the menace they represent is satisfyingly real. This is established in the sequence where they first encounter mankind, gliding down like humanoid bats onto the airless surface of the moon to first terrorise and then casually murder the members of an international space expedition. And even as a non-American I found their easy violation of the White House slightly shocking, along with their forcing of the President (E.G. Marshall) to his knees to officially submit to their rule. "Oh God," mutters the President. "No," replies General Zod, "It's Zod."

The other main ingredient in the movie is the relationship between Superman/Clark Kent and Lois Lane (Margot

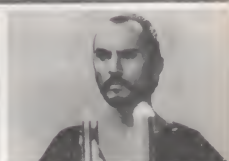
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**In order to have a normal relationship with Lois, Superman is obliged to surrender his super-powers.**

---

Kidder). This is both amusing and touching, thanks to the respective acting skills of Reeve and Kidder. Their scenes together have an underlying sexual tension, despite the basic absurdity of the situation, which adds to their believability as characters.

Superman is faced with the classic dilemma that always plagued him in the comic books — he is in love with Lois in his Clark Kent guise but she only has eyes for Superman and treats Clark with condescension. All would be solved if he could simply reveal the truth to her but of course he's sworn to keep his identity a secret. However, during an assignment with Lois at Niagra Falls to expose a honeymoon racket at a hotel, where they are obliged to pose as man and wife, he gets careless and Lois begins to suspect that Clark and Supes are one and the same. To prove it she launches herself into the Falls in front of Clark, in the same way that the Lois of the comic was always casually hurling herself off the top of skyscrapers to attract Superman's attention (there had to be an easier way). This fails but later Clark actually gives himself away, on purpose, and takes off his glasses to prove that he is indeed the Man of Steel (nice bit of acting here by Reeve who seems to visibly change into Superman while still dressed in his



Top: Clark Kent (Christopher Reeve) hauls Lois Lane (Margot Kidder: don't miss our highly controversial interview with the actress next month!) out of the drink after she had hurtled herself into the rapids beneath Niagra Falls in an attempt to force poor Clark into revealing his identity as Superman. Left: Superman (Chris Reeve) grapples with the Kryptonian villain, General Zod (Terence Stamp), who has powers equal to those of Superman himself. Above: A portrait of Terence Stamp as the psychopathic Zod. Below: Luthor (Gene Hackman) and his imbecilic henchman, Otis (Ned Beatty) make their escape from prison.



Below: *Ursula swings a pretty mean manhole cover. Interestingly, Sarah had appeared in The Land that Time Forgot. Coming across a still of herself from that film in a corridor at Pinewood studios, she pointed it out to Gene Hackman. "My, what a pretty girl!" she remarked. Hackman wasn't impressed. "She's okay. But she's not in your class." Right: "Christopher Reeve has certainly made the part [of Superman] very much his own, making Kirk Alyn and George Reeves look pale in comparison. He injected more than just brain and brawn into the role.: - Mike Munn, Starburst 31. Reeve doesn't see it quite that way. "Clark Kent is more fun to play. There is more scope to the role because he is such an awful mess."*



civvies).

In order to have a normal relationship with Lois he is obliged to surrender his super powers (just why this is so isn't made clear but one can draw one's own conclusions). The means to do this are conveniently provided in his Fortress of Solitude, as if his parents knew this would be happening one day (the parents on this occasion are represented only by Lara, played by Susannah York, as apparently the price of using a few ghostly shots of Marlon Brando as Jor-El would have bought a small country).

Now a normal human being, if you can call anyone who looks like Christopher Reeve normal, Superman is able to actually consummate his relationship with Lois, an event of some historical importance to us old readers of the comic book. (I mean, I never thought that... well... gosh!) The scene is, of course, handled very discreetly and wouldn't even bring a blush to the cheek of Mary Whitehouse.

The following sequences interestingly suggest that Lois perhaps was only in love with the super powers and the red and blue costume as she appears to be treating him more like Clark than Superman, but this intriguing development isn't followed up. Instead, after learning the hard way what it's like to be an ordinary mortal



when he's beaten up by a trucker in a cafe, Superman hears about the three Kryptonians and immediately hitch-hikes back to his Fortress of Solitude (I never realized the North Pole was so accessible before).

Regaining his powers by a process I couldn't understand, Supey faces up to the three villains and there follows a spectacular battle over, and in, the streets of Manhattan. There's a final confrontation between them all, including Luthor, in the Fortress of Solitude and I guess I'm not giving anything away if I say that Supey ends up victorious. There's even a satisfying tag sequence where he goes back to the diner, as Clark Kent, and gives the trucker his come-uppance. "I've been taking a course in muscle-building," he tells the startled owner of the diner after he has sent the trucker hurtling down the length of the counter.

But this wouldn't be a Brosnan review if I didn't have some criticism to make about the movie — so here it is. The special effects, I'm afraid, are at times something of a disappointment and as in Part I it's the optical effects that are the main problem (the physical effects are excellent, particularly those involving, as usual, travelling mattes. As I said way back in Starburst 7 when discussing the

effects in Superman I, no matter how technically accomplished a travelling matte shot may be, using the blue screen process, there's always something about it that doesn't look right. It's difficult enough using it with an inanimate object like a space ship but with a human figure like Superman, complete with fluttering cape, the loss of realism is even greater.

These occasional flaws aren't enough to detract from one's enjoyment of Superman II and it's only because the overall quality of the effects in the movie are so high that these lapses are noticeable.

On all other counts, however, Superman II is a winner. Richard Lester, who took over the directing helm from Richard Donner, wisely didn't attempt to impose his own idiosyncratic style on the picture (I am, by the way, a great fan of Lester's and even wrote a book once about his movies... but no one bought it!), with the exception of a few Lester-type touches of off-beat humour, but continued Donner's approach of treating the subject matter with the correct balance of comedy and seriousness.

Watching Superman II was the most enjoyable time I've had in a cinema for a long time and I predict there won't be another fantasy movie along in 1981 that will top it.



#### The Ninth Configuration (1981)

Stacy Keach (as Colonel Kane), Scott Wilson (Captain Cutshaw), Jason Miller (Lieutenant Reno), Ed Flanders (Colonel Felt), Neville Brand (Groper), George DiCenzo (Captain Fairbanks), Moses Gunn (Captain Nammack), Robert Loggia (Lieutenant Bannish), Alejandro Rey (Lieutenant Gomez), Tom Atkins (Sergeant Krebs).

Written, produced and directed by William Peter Blatty, Director of photography Gerry Fisher, Production design by Bill Malley and J. Dinnes Washington, Music by Barry DeVorzon, Supervising Film editor Peter Taylor, Film editors T. Battle Davis, Peter Lee-Thompson and Roberto Silvi, Assistant director Tom Shaw, Set Decoration by Sydney Ann Kee, Special Effects by Willard Flanagan, Stunt Coordinator Bobby Bass, Associate producer Tom Shaw, Executive producer William Paul. A Lorimer film.

Time: 105 mins

Cert: X

# THE NINTH CONFIGURATION

It is hard to categorise a film like *The Ninth Configuration*. There really hasn't been a film like it, and while that sounds like typical press office hype, I cannot think of any other film that resembles it in either form or content. Robert Altman's *Brewster McCloud*'s zaniness is a close comparison to this film's lighter moods — but then, only just.

*The Ninth Configuration* is based on William Peter Blatty's book *Twinkle Twinkle, Killer Kane* and he wrote, produced and directed it on location in Budapest for Warner Brothers, the company who had reaped huge financial rewards from Blatty's most famous film adaptation, *The Exorcist*. Unfortunately Warners had no idea how to promote what they considered a difficult picture and it languished on release until an independent company picked it up, changed the title to *Twinkle Twinkle, Killer Kane* and re-released it. The film has since won a Golden Globe award for *Best Screenplay* and the *Best Actor* award for Scott Wilson at the International Mystery Film Festival.

It isn't hard to see the problems in marketing such a picture as this due to its subject matter concerning insanity, philosophy, theology and black comedy as it definitely needs an attentive viewer to decipher it all but I can't help thinking that I.T.C. are on the wrong track with their advertising campaign in Britain.

They are trading on Blatty's past success and making it look like a Clock-

work *Orange* with their poster artwork.

In reality what it is about is a gothic castle near the coast of Washington State called Centre 18 which is being used by the Pentagon as a special psychiatric hospital for the military. Here high ranking service personnel, such as Captain Cutshaw (Scott Wilson), a NASA astronaut who aborted a vital space probe minutes before take-off, are treated for mental breakdowns seemingly unrelated to their military experience. All the inmates are consumed by some similar inner torment or have assumed alter-egos. Major Nammack (Moses Gunn) thinks he's Superman, and Lieutenant Reno (Jason Miller, who you will remember as Father Karras in *The Exorcist*) is adapting the works of Shakespeare for the canine species. Into this sea of mental disturbance comes Colonel Hudson Kane (Stacy Keach) as a brilliant and unorthodox psychiatrist who decides to let the inmates indulge their wildest fantasies in an effort to break down their lunatic facades. But even Kane himself has a gruesome secret and as he leads the inmates back to reality and to face up to their responsibilities the dividing line between sanity and madness assumes an increasingly vague definition as he moves on to his own intense and apocalyptic catharsis.

If all this sounds totally bewildering — there is even more as the film explores the ideas of God and evil within this basic context. The inmates fear the evil within themselves and are afraid that, if this is a







Review by Alan Jones

# ATION

Godless universe, then man is leading a purposeless existence.

Just to round things off nicely, I should tell you that the title *The Ninth Configuration* refers to a speech given about God and molecular structure.

As you can tell, this is one of those films that some will condemn as incredibly pretentious and shallow and others will extol the virtues of such a powerful and meaningful statement. I, for one, enjoyed the sparkling and amusing dialogue (Lieutenant Reno, "Here I am auditioning for Julius Caesar and they send me a dog with a lisp") and some of the visual imagery is superb. The opening credit shot of the space mission is incredibly exhilarating and moving as are the crucifixion scenes on the moon itself and the ending is very reassuring as it proves life after death as a fact and not just a hopeful possibility. But it is heavy going at times and often gruelling... The film's major failing is by trying to be the ultimate "Art" movie, it takes itself far too seriously for its own good. I think most people's reaction to the ending will be "so what" as opposed to the emotional uplifting intended.

Nevertheless do see this film and make up your own mind. Not only is it an impressive debut from Mr Blatty but it tries to do something different and doesn't take its audience for a lot of fools who park their brains at the cinema ticket kiosk. And I for one will support the film for at least doing that.

# BLOOD BEACH

Review by Alan Jones

**B**lood Beach sucks! It really does - Honestly! If you should find yourself alone on a certain nameless beach in Southern California - Watch out! The chances are that you'll be sucked under the sand *even* before you find out that its safe to go back into the water, to use one of the more witty lines in the script.

The disappearances start with harbour patrol officer Harry Caulder's (David Huffman) next door neighbour Ruth (Harriet Medin), and continue with his air stewardess girlfriend, his patrol partner Hoggy (Darrell Fetty) and a would-be rapist, although I'll leave it to your imaginations as to what part of his anatomy disappears first.

As usual in these sort of films, the police, represented here by Police Captain Pearson (John Saxon), Lieutenant Piantadosi (Otis Young) and Sergeant Royko (Burt Young) are completely baffled after their preliminary searches. It isn't quicksand, so what exactly is causing all these sinister disappearances? Unfortunately the answer is nothing more original than that 50s B-movie shock staple, the papier-mache monster in this case looking like something left over from an early episode of Doctor Who. Luckily though we don't see it for too long as it is blown to smithereens by the obnoxious character that Burt Young has been playing, a part that seems written into the script to solely justify this particular action.

Director Jeffrey Bloom's genre debut is familiar territory all the way, there is no new emergent talent on display here.

The story is really nothing spectacular and is reliant on basic formula shock effects. One exception to this rule is where our heroine, Catherine (Mariana Hill), decides to investigate an old childhood hideout in the basement of a burnt out building and not only discovers the creature's lair but... No, I really mustn't spoil the movie's only decent attempt at atmosphere and horror.

However, as workmanlike and as formulaised as the movie is, *Blood Beach* is watchable. I have seen worse and it is competently acted. It's just that you can't make a simple "monster movie" these days without adding a new perspective somewhere. *Jaws* proved that, and before someone points out the vast differences in budget, the recent *Corman* production *Monster* did it as well by adding absurdly salacious bad taste.

*Blood Beach* just isn't different enough from the 50s counterparts that inspired it - Jeffrey Bloom may think he's updated the concept, but he hasn't. He's merely echoing it.

## Blood Beach (1981)

David Huffman (as Harry), Mariana Hill (Catherine), John Saxon (Pearson), Otis Young (Piantadosi), Stefan Giersack (Dimitrios), Burt Young (Royko), Darrell Fetty (Hoggy), Lynne Marta (Jo), Eleanor Zee (Mrs Seldon), Lena Pousette (Marie), Pamela McMyler (Mrs Hench), Harriet Medin (Ruth), Bobby Bass (rapist). Written and directed by Jeffrey Bloom, Music by Gil Melle, Photographed by Steve Poster, Art direction by Bill Sandell, Produced by Steven Nalevansky, Executive producer Sidney Beckerman.

Time: 90 mins

Cert: AA





**B**ack in issue 29 of *Starburst* when I was teking to task the current rash of demented revenge horror thrillers, I included *Motel Hell* as one of the similar forthcoming movies. Silly mel That'll be the last time I believe advance word-of-mouth when it comes to films — or anything else, come to think of it.

*Motel Hell* is actually a very pleasant surprise, a whecky black comedy fer removed from the likes of *He Knows You're Alone on the Terror Train Silently Screaming on the Way to the Prom Night*.

"It takes all kinds of critters to make Farmer Vincent's fritters!" The prime ingredient is meat — human meat of course, this being the 80s and cannibalism being the "in" theme in several horror films. Farmer Vincent (*Rory Calhoun*) is famed locally for his spiced, smoked meats with the special added ingredient, and, of course, *no* preservatives. For yeers he has supplied the local yokels with the finest in tasty teke-aways and everybody thrives on them, blissfully unaware of their true nature.

Living with his sister Ide (a superbly nutty performance by *Nancy Parsons*) in the run-down Motel Hello, Farmer Vincent embushes passers-by. He end Ide then bury them alive in their hidden garden, leaving only the heads protruding from the ground. Their vocal chords are slit and they are force-fed on the best natural foods, fattening them up before the inevitable one-way trip to the slaughterhouse.

*Motel Hell* was directed by British film maker Kevin Connor whose previous credits include *At the Earth's Core*, *From Beyond the Grave* and *Arabian Adventure*. *Motel Hell* marks his American debut and if the box office response in America is anything to go by, it won't be his last.

The script by Robert Jeffe takes an idea from *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre* and attempts to expand it to a full length

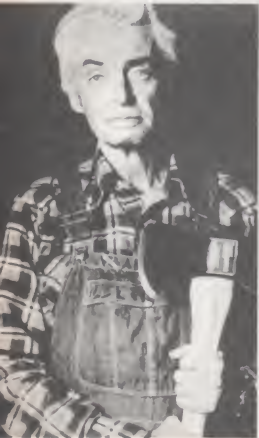
feature, though not with complete success. The subject is certainly one ripe for comedy at its blackest, but the film seems undecided in which direction it should go. Apparently the film's American distributors faced a similar dilemma. When it opened, *Motel Hell* was sold as an out-end-out horror movie and died in the cinemas. United Artists rethought their publicity campaign and the film was re-released with a campaign which stressed the outrageous comedy aspects of the film. The result was neer-boffo b.o. as *Variety* would sey.





Above left: A tip of the hat to Tobe Hooper's *Texas Chainsaw Massacre*. Farmer Vincent (Rory Calhoun, in the pig mask) attempts to put an end to the screams of victim Terry (Nine Axelrod). Above: Farmer Vincent stands outside his run-down motel. Below: The Vincents, proprietors of Motel Hell.

Filed on a budget of three million dollars, *Motel Hell* has been imbued by Connor with a striking visual style, capturing a kind of American Gothic look little seen outside the pages of the early E.C. Comics like *Tales from the Crypt* and *Vault of Horror*. Tobe Hooper also



took his inspiration from the pages of those great comics a few years ago with the underrated *Death Trap*, a film not unlike *Motel Hell* in mood and visual execution.

This comparison with the horror comics of the 50s is a key, I feel, to the failings of the film. The plot is simply too slim to support a full-length feature and there are times when *Motel Hell* suffers from being overblown in the script department. The balance of outrageous horror and black comedy goes a little skilter at times, something Hooper neatly avoided in *Death Trap*. In *Motel Hell* the absurdist black humour gets lost amid the blood and guts and bursts of harrowing physical violence.

The horror scenes are pretty explicit, particularly the details of planting and harvesting the human vegetables. The throat operations are pretty nasty too and these sequences have a nightmarish sadism attached to them, quite uncommon in American horror films. The throaty gurgles of the victims are made all the more horrible by the use of Dolby stereo.

Dolby further enhances the confrontation between Farmer Vincent and his young brother Bruce (Paul Linke), armed with chainsaws and staged amid the blood and severed limbs of the slaughterhouse. It's excitingly staged, if ultimately a little too protracted. The scene does provide the best of many gags in the film though. As Farmer Vincent stands, dying on his feet, entrails spilling from his body, he says, "I'm the greatest hypocrite of all. I used preservatives!"

Even though *Motel Hell* does fall between the two stools of horror and comedy rather clumsily at times, it is an interesting variation in horror cinema. It's a commendable effort from all concerned to make something different from all those loony-on-the-loose movies which are currently clogging the cinema.

# HELL

Review by  
Phil Edwards

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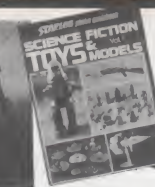
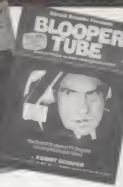
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A STARBURST INTERVIEW BY JOHN FLEMING

# JACQUELINE PEARCE

**J**acqueline Pearce was born in Woking and grew up in Byfleet, Surrey. Her father was an interior decorator and her family background is East End. At the age of six or seven, she started having elocution lessons to get rid of a "slight cockney accent" and she was educated at the Marist Convent in Byfleet. It was there that a lay teacher (ie, not a nun) encouraged her acting talent. But young Jacqueline's time at convent school was not altogether happy. She says she hated the rules and couldn't abide the discipline. She could never understand why the nuns said she should walk upstairs when to run would have been much quicker. Now, she says, "Every time I go on as Servanne and I've got one of those dresses that's slit down to the waist and up to the hips I look in the mirror and say *Up yours, reverend mother!*" At the age of sixteen, she was almost expelled for performing outspoken dialogue from John Osborne's *Look Back in Anger* at a local drama festival. The nuns thought it was "wicked and shocking" but Jacqueline won first prize and a cup to put on the convent mantelpiece, so she was forgiven. When she

eventually did leave the convent in 1961, she won a scholarship to RADA (the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art, London) despite strong initial opposition from the nuns and her family.

She spent two years at RADA with fellow students Anthony Hopkins, John Hurt, Ian McShane, Simon Ward and David Warner. During that time, she also met young actor Drewie Henley at a local coffee bar and they married. Her first acting role on screen was with Drewie Henley, Ian McShane and John Hurt in the 1964 Granada tv play *Watch Me I'm a Bird*. In the same year, she also appeared in the feature film *Genghis Khan*: "I was given as a present by Eli Wallach to Stephen Boyd. Not a word was said and I flew all the way to Yugoslavia for it". In 1965, she played Ian McShane's girlfriend in the John Mills movie *Sky West and Crooked*. And she also appeared in the Morecambe & Wise movie *The Magnificent Two* and the Jerry Lewis fiasco *Don't Raise the Bridge, Lower the River* (both 1967). But her best-remembered film roles were in Hammer pictures.

**Starburst:** You starred in *The Reptile* and *Plague of the Zombies* and on both of them you worked with make-up men Roy Ashton [interview in next month's *Starburst*].

**Jacqueline Pearce:** Yes, for *Plague of the Zombies*, he made a plaster thing of my face and head for a sequence where my head was chopped off. It was dreadful. I had to stop halfway through because, at that time, I was very claustrophobic. Suddenly I was having this plaster of Paris all over me with just slight holes left for the nose and it's very, very heavy and, at one point, I just said *I can't take it any more! You've got to take it off!* and then we just had to start all over again. It was very unpleasant. I suppose it must have taken about half an hour for it to set. It's — ohh — it's dreadful. I was married then and had my husband literally holding my hand and getting me through it. It's clammy and then it gets hard and it gets so heavy and you know you can't pull it off, so — ohh — not fun. I got more and more frightened.

**Not fun.**

And it was very strange walking into make-up

the next day and seeing my head on a shelf. That was a little disturbing.

*You tested for Hammer, did you?*

I went along for an interview and had a chat with the director [John Gilling] and he said "I'd like you to play the parts because you have such a wonderful face for films" ... So he cast me as a zombie and a reptile [Laughs]

*How did you act the part of a snake in The Reptile?*

I hissed a lot. I think that was about it.

*Your movement was quite good too.*

I know the bit you're referring to. [Laughs] There's a bit where I was shifting under the blankets, which everyone seemed to enjoy a lot — I was shedding my skin.

*It's a difficult part. You're cast as a snake. How are you going to act it?*

Well, she was half-snake, half-woman.

*Like Servalan.*

Do you think Servalan's a snake?

*She's a villainess.*

But she's got great style. I adore Servalan.

*How did you get the part in Blake's 7?*

I was working in Vienna at the English Speaking Theatre. I got a phone call from my agent saying that this series I'd never heard of

was being made and would I be interested in playing a part. So I said *sure*. It meant I started rehearsals the day I got back from Vienna. I got off the plane and went to the BBC. My hair was short at the time and they said *Please, will you keep it like that?*

*I thought maybe you'd cut and dyed your hair specially for the part — short, black and sinister.*

No. Most people love it. They find it compulsive and they want to stroke it — *Fael free*. It's simply because I'm no good at doing hair. I can't put rollers in. I had lovely long thick hair that used to blow into my face all the time — when I put my head down, I couldn't see.

*What did you know about the character when you started?*

Nothing, except that I knew she was the Supreme Commander. What we all did, really, was make our own personalities. When it came to costume-fitting, they said "We'll fit you up in trousers, a safari jacket and jackboots" and I said *No!* If you're going to do that with this haircut, you might as well have a man. I think you should go totally opposite. If she is a woman who has this kind of power, than make her so feminine, so pretty, you don't know

what she's going to do next. So when she is sitting there looking wonderful saying *Kill him!* it's such a shock. It's the contrasts.

*How did you build up the character? A female Adolph Hitler?*

No, I don't think she is, actually. I think she is a very caring human being. No-one would believe that. [Pause] No, lots of people do — it's surprising.

*Surely she's nasty. She wants to get our heroes and do horrible things to them.*

Yes, but if she were a man doing those things, everyone would accept it. I remember there was one episode [The Harvest of Kairos in series three] about a sort of precious jewel called kairopan and they said, "We can't afford to get *all* the kairopan and all the men," so Servalan said *Well, get rid of the men — Kill the men*. It was logical. One had to go. She wanted the kairopan, so the men had to go because they were less important. The scriptwriter put in that line and then wrote *laughs cruelly*. Rubbish! She doesn't get a kick out of killing people at all. She does what she feels she has to do. I'm not saying that makes her the girl next door.

*Has she changed?*



Above: Jacqueline Pearce, picture in 1966, with the false head made by Hammer make-up wizard Roy Ashton for the film *Pledge of the Zombies*. Right: Jacqueline Pearce as she appeared in the 1966 Hammer horror movie *The Reptile*.

She changed a lot in the third series. The miscarriage episode: it started there, where her personal feelings, her women-ness, started to come through. I remember I did a personal appearance opening Computers For The Home and I was surrounded by some of the top brains in the country, who were all really avid Blake's 7 fans. They rushed home from their computers on Monday nights to watch it. One of them said that he watched the scene where I had the miscarriage and found it shocking because it was so totally unexpected. From then, on, I tried to show the female side of her as much as possible. She does like man, she's crazy about Avon — that's why she always lets him go. Otherwise it makes no sense to have this intelligent woman chasing these people around in a spaceship, catching them, then letting them go. I had to find a motivation — which was Avon.

*Is that the only change you've made — she's more feminine?*

That's a huge change to have made.

*Any resistance from the BBC?*

Yes. For the first two series I played her the

way they wanted, which was a substitute man. And she's not: she's 100% female. So I tried to get more of that over.

*Do you think the audience appreciates that?*

I think they do, judging from the fan letters I get. Everyone responds to her in a very positive way. Some people, particularly women, love her — I think Women's Lib love her. I think to men she's a challenge.

*What sort of letters do you get?*

I get lovely letters. There was one letter that made me laugh so much. A man wrote and asked if he could have a full-length photograph of me with no clothes on and hastened to add that this was not for any sexual purposes.

*[Laughs]*

*Getting back to the way you approach roles.*

*Between 1967 and 1971, you were in America.*

*You joined the Actors' Studio in New York, which is the home of method acting — Brando and so on. Why did you go to America?*

I got divorced. I just wanted to get away. I joined the Actors' Studio because I wasn't working and so I was going crazy. I didn't have a work permit. I knew I had to do something,

so I went to the Actors' Studio and auditioned and passed and was accepted, which meant I could work there. So it was a way of saving my sanity.

*Did you learn anything useful?*

I think one always does even if it doesn't seem to have much value at the time. I think Strasberg (who runs the Actors' Studio) tends to be a little bit of a dictator. His way is the only way and that's it. It's like religion. If you're not Catholic, you won't go to heaven; and if you don't do the Actors' Studio, you won't be a good actress. That's rubbish.

*Just like being back in a convent?*

Yes, it is.

*And you react against that?*

Yes, I do. I always do react against it.

*Why didn't you stay in America?*

Well, I love New York passionately, but Los Angeles is like a planet all on its own. It's hard enough to cope if you're a man. It's virtually impossible if you're a woman. Also, I didn't get a work permit from working with Strasberg, I just became a member of the Studio. It took about three years to get my work permit, by



Above: A scene from *Don't Raise the Bridge, Lower the River* (1967) in which Jacqueline Pearce (extreme left) starred with Jerry Lewis (extreme right). Right: A portrait of Jacqueline Pearce. Below: *Servant* (Jacqueline Pearce) and Travis (Brian Croucher, the second actor to portray the character, the first was Stephen Greif) in the Blake's 7 episode *Weapon*.





which time I was so homesick I just had to come home.

*Did you come back a method actress?*

I came back with an understanding of it, but not necessarily a way to work with it. I'm very instinctive in the way I work — you ask Paul Darrow. *[Interview In Starburst 28]* I love working with him. We work together very, very well. Paul always knows what he's doing in front of a camera; technically he's quite brilliant and I rely on him for that. He'll make sure I'm in the light or not blocking myself. He lets me go completely intuitively and he responds to that. It's like a wonderful marriage: very rare and wonderful when it happens.

*You've had to contend with two different actors playing the part of Travis.*

That was very difficult.

*They were slightly different characters.*

Totally different.

*It must have been very difficult to...*

Adjust. It was Steve *[Greiff]*, the first one, I could bounce off. Brian *[Croucher]* is a totally different type of actor. And the reason he had to go on being "Travis" was that Terry Nation

*[Interviewed In Starburst 6]* insisted on having that name. But instead of letting Brian find his Travis, they tried to make him follow Steven's. Fetal. He's actually a wonderful actor. I've seen him do wonderful things. But Brian's not really a heavy. He's lightweight and cuddly. He's not really menacing, which Steven was.

*Menace is indefinable. Your character is sort of menacing.*

I think it's the danger of Servalan that makes her menacing: the opposites that are present in her all the time. No-one ever feels totally relaxed around her except Avon.

*Avon's got two facets to his character, too.*

Well, we've always felt they were opposite sides of the same coin.

*He's nice with nasty bits and you're nasty with nice bits?*

That's right, yes.

*Was that conscious?*

No. In the third series, we got more and more to do together because we insisted on it. When we had the love scene, that brought in loads of fan letters and, in another episode, I kissed him as well and the audiences loved it. They like

people to relate.

*The new character Terrant is a sort of Blake Mark II. The first Blake character didn't seem to work out, because it's difficult to get any humanity into a straight up-and-down hero.*

Impossible. No-one really likes a nice guy.

*Why do you think villains like you are more interesting than heroes like the original Blake?*

The straight up-and-down characters tend to make most people resentful because they're being good and, God knows, we're not. Whereas someone who is a villain is fallible and makes mistakes and is cheap and rotten and we all are that sometimes. So, seeing someone be that, an audience thinks *Oh, I'm not quite so bad after all*. They can identify and empathise. Well, Servalan's a bit over-the-top: there aren't many people who go around like her. *[Laughs]* You're maybe not a Hitler figure, but you're a sort of female Napoleon.

Yes, but I think if Servalan did get full power, full control, she'd rule very fairly. I don't think she's into power for its own sake; I think power means something different for her. It might originally have been power for its own sake but,



Above: A scene from *Don't Raise the Bridge, Lower the River* (1967) with Jacqueline Pearce (left) and Jerry Lewis (right). Left: A portrait of Jacqueline Pearce as Servalan, arch-villainess of the BBC tv series *Blake's 7*. Below: Jacqueline Pearce and Michael Gough on the set of *Blake's 7* (photo by John Fleming).



when she fell in love with Avon, suddenly she realised that the main power is love.

*Ah, you should be a scriptwriter.*

It requires tremendous self-discipline, which I don't have. What I'd really like to do is produce.

*Why?*

Because then I could pick the directors I wanted, the crew, the actors and the script.

*You'd just produce?*

I'd act as well. But I'd love to produce, even if it were just once — which it probably will be. I'd love to do it on film. You know, go for broke. [Laughs]

*Why film rather than stage or tv?*

Of all the media, I love film best. It's free-est. It uses the imagination in a way you can't in theatre and don't on telly. The options are enormous. Ideally, I'd like to do films all the time.

*So what have you been doing since the last season of Blaka's 7?*

I went straight off to America the day after we finished the show and spent some time in New York and Mississippi and then went out to Los Angeles and I saw Terry Nation when I was in Hollywood. He doesn't want to be in England any more. You can understand. It takes so long to get anything done here. Anyway, I came back from there and I was offered a film which I turned down. It was vulgar, cheap and exploitative. It was a science fiction film, of course —

you can see how their minds work. My part consisted of sitting on a loo doing something extremely intimate and then I got murdered sitting on the loo and I could see no justification for this. I thought *No, I'm not going to sit on a loo, dear*. Awful film: I can't even remember its name.

*And then?*

Then I went into hospital. I collapsed and was resting in hospital for a while. Then I came out and I was going to do one of the first Hammer House of Horror films and I found I had a lump in my breast and had to go and have that taken out. I'd never been ill before. I came out of hospital again and went off to do (the Tom Stoppard play) *Night and Day* and apparently anaesthetic stays in your system for about a month after you've had a general anaesthetic and I didn't allow enough time and I'm quite highly strung, as you may have noticed. So I finished *Night and Day*, which is a very, very tough job, came back here, tried to keep going, but I got to the state where all I could do was cry. The other Saturday morning, I was just sitting in a heap crying and crying and crying. *Night and Day* has the female lead on stage most of the time, doesn't it?

Yes, it's a huge part to carry, particularly when you're not well. But now I feel absolutely wonderful.

*You've done Blaka's 7 for three years. There's the obvious problem of being typecast.*

Well, we'll just have to see. I mean, I've always been typecast as a strong lady. I think being dark-haired you tend to get put into a category. If you're blonde you play the wife and if you're dark you play the mistress.

*What happens if Blaka's 7 stops after the fourth season?*

Well, the way it looks to me, it could go on for ever if they keep giving the public what the public seems to want and not trying to give them something they want the public to have, which is very different. There's no reason why it couldn't go on for ever.

*I'm surprised it has developed such a following. The BBC scheduled it against Coronation Street.*

I know and one year we were put up against *Cherlie's Angels*, which had a very big following. But last season we averaged ten million viewers a week, which is a lot of people. *What was your reaction to being given the Starburst Award as best actress?*

It was undoubtedly one of the biggest thrills of my life and I was so moved when I got it that, if I hadn't made a joke or tried to be funny, I would just have burst into tears and wept. I'd like to thank everyone who voted for me. I care very much about the show; I care very much about the people I'm doing it for because, without them, I don't have a job. I shall look at the award and think of all those people. Thank you.



Above: Jacqueline Pearce made an appearance on the Thames Television show *Star Games* along with (left to right, standing) Tom Adams, Brenden Price, Bernard Lee, Gareth Hunt and (left to right, kneeling) Paul Darrow, Stephen Grives and Jenny Lee Wright. Right: Jacqueline Pearce on stage in Tom Stoppard's *Night and Day* at the Belgrade Theatre, Coventry.



Love and thanks to  
all the readers of *Starburst*  
Lynne Price





Left: A scene that was cut from the final version of the film to obtain an A certificate. A close up of Angela (Barbara Kellerman) melting at the climax of the Shadmoor story. Above: The Master of Ceremonies at The Monster Club introduces a guest speaker, the great Vampire film producer Linton Subotsky (I) Right: Vincent Price as Erasmus the Vampire Below: Horror writer R. Chetwynd-Hayes (John Carradine) listens attentively as Erasmus (Vincent Price) unfolds his tales of terror.

## A SPECIAL BEHIND-THE-SCENES REPORT NEW MILTON SUBOTSKY FILM THROUGH

# THE MC

**W**ith the collapse of *Thongor in the Valley of Demons* as a live-action feature (see *Starburst 28* for the full story) in November 1979, producer Milton Subotsky turned to a script he had commissioned some years before and offered it to ITC.

Subotsky had renewed his options on Ronald Chetwynd-Hayes novel *The Monster Club* ever since the book had been first published in 1975. He liked the basic framework of the book, that of a special club for monsters and also the premise of the novel. That is, the results of cross-breeding monsters, an idea originated by Chetwynd-Hayes.

The ITC subsidiary Chips Productions, which had ironically backed the sword and sorcery feature *Hawk the Slayer*, accepted *The Monster Club* and Subotsky presented a budget of £850,000 for the film.

Subotsky then went about choosing a director. Initially it was to be Edward Abraham, who co-wrote the script with his wife Valerie. Abraham has worked in television on documentaries and episodes of *Crossroads* and had directed a short based on Poe's *The Pit and the Pendulum* some years ago. However when the film was scheduled at a very tight twenty eight days, Subotsky felt a more experienced hand was required. He narrowed his choice to either Freddie Francis or Roy Ward Baker. Having worked with both directors previously on the *Amicus* films he felt that Francis may have required longer to shoot the film and Subotsky chose Baker.

Roy Ward Baker, who had begun his career in the Thirties at the Gainsborough Studios, had been inactive in feature films for several years, his last fantasy oriented feature being *The Legend of the Seven Golden Vampires* in 1974. However he had been busy with television work, directing episodes of *Danger UXB* and the highly successful *Minder* series.







RT FROM STARBURST REGULAR PHIL EDWARDS WHO WAS ON THE SET OF THE  
GHOUT SHOOTING AND NOW SENDS THIS REPORT ON THE MAKING OF . . .

# MONSTER CLUB



With the director set, Subotsky then put the rest of the crew together. From the Amicus days he selected art director Tony Curtis whose expertise in creating an expensive look on a low budget is well known in the film industry. Horror films' best known make-up artist, Roy Ashton (*see interview next month*), was signed on and assisting him, another veteran, Ernie Gasser.

Although Gasser has been working since the Thirties, *The Monster Club* was his first horror film. Other Amicus alumni were called in — editor Peter Tanner, hairdresser Joan Carpenter and unit publicist Lily Poyser.

Ms Poyser, who had worked on the Samuel Bronston epics of the Sixties, did her job almost too well. She created enormous media interest in the film and on some days of shooting it was not uncommon to have a string of journalists on the set as well as television and radio crews, some from as far afield as Australia.

To photograph the feature Baker and Subotsky chose Peter Jessop who had worked on several of the Peter Walker exploitation horror films and also with Baker on episodes of *Danger UXB*. The soft-spoken Jessop had also won an award a few years previously at the Sitges Fantasy Film Festival for his work on Walker's *The Comeback*.

Dominic Fulford who had worked on *Star Wars*, *The Empire Strikes Back*, *Superman* and *Superman II* was brought in as first assistant director.

With *Monster Club* only a matter of months from shooting, Subotsky assembled his cast. It was the producer's intention to cast as many horror film stars in the feature as possible. This was not to be, however. Christopher Lee, entrenched in the California lifestyle responded negatively as did Peter Cushing. Both actors seem to have

## THE MONSTER CLUB

Right: The ghoulish inhabitants of Loughville, urged by The Innkeeper (Patrick Magee, third from right), pursue Sam across the village square. The set is similar to a design used in Subotsky's earlier *City of the Dead* (1959). Art director Tony Curtis saved on material costs when he found a yard full of old weathered timber with which to construct the ramshackle village. Below: The crew of *The Monster Club* on location at Knebworth House, which provided both interiors and exteriors for the Shadmok's house. Roy Ward Baker lines up a shot on the main camera while an assistant does the same for a lower angle. First assistant director Dominic Fulford is seen at far left, equipped with natty checked hat and two way radio.



disassociated themselves from the type of roles which made them international stars. Klaus Kinski apparently wanted more money than the budget could afford.

Subotsky sent the script to Vincent Price who had all but given up film work in favour of his first love, the theatre. Price had been touring with his highly-acclaimed one man show, *Oscar Wilde*, for three years. The veteran horror star loved the script, pleased to be associated with a film that would be suitable for

younger audiences. The film gave Price the chance to play a vampire on the cinema screen for the first time.

To portray Chetwynd-Hayes, Subotsky contracted John Carradine, who by his own count has appeared in over four hundred films. Long considered one of Hollywood's finest character actors, Carradine is most fondly remembered by fantasy film fans for his unique interpretation of Dracula in the Forties Universal classics *House of Frankenstein* (1944)

and *House of Dracula* (1945). He had appeared with Vincent Price in only one other film, *The Story of Menkind*, in 1957.

The rest of the casting followed naturally if not smoothly. For the story *Mother Married a Vampire*, Richard Johnson was cast as a vampire and father of vampire film producer Lintom Busotsky, an anagram as obvious as the Count Alucard who haunted *Son of Dracula* in 1943. Britt Ekland plays his loving wife. Caroline Munro was also considered but she was



## THE MONSTER CLUB

Left: A frame from the comic strip brochure. Right: A portrait of James Laurenson as the Shadmok, Raven. Below: "You're hideous... revolting! The money, the jewels! That's all I ever wanted from you!" Angela (Barbara Kellermann) puts Raven in his place. Inset below: John Bolton's initial concept for the Shadmok, the result is uncannily like Laurenson.



Photo by Phil Edwards

unavailable, busy filming *Maniac* in America. Lintom Busotky is cameoed by one-time matinee idol Anthony Steele after Robert Morley was considered and Peter Cushing refused the role. The young Lintom is played sensitively by child actor Warren Seale. The forces of good, or in the case of *The Monster Club* the forces of evil, are led by Donald Pleasence as Pickering, ace vampire hunter and head of the Blood Squad, *The Bleeny*.

The ghoul story stars Stuart Whitman as

Sen, an impatient horror film director in search of a suitable location for his new production. Lesley Dunlop plays Lune the Humagoo, the result of a ghoul marrying a human. Lune's father and leader of the ghouls is essayed by the wonderful Patrick Magee, all toothless smile and drool. The set constructed for the village of ghouls was the single most elaborate set built for the film and covered an entire soundstage at EMI-Elstree Studios.

For *Shadmok*, Subotsky chose Barbara

Kellermann who had previously appeared in the *Quatermass* television series and the action epic *The Sea Wolves*. Her scheming boyfriend is portrayed by Simon Ward. The important role of the Shadmok went to Royal Shakespeare Company player James Laurenson. Subotsky was pleased to acquire the services of Laurenson, an actor he has long admired. The RSC player was the producer's first choice for a role in *Asylum* in 1972, but when he proved unavailable the then-newcomer Robert Powell

# THE MONSTER CLUB

Right: John Bolton's portrayal of Sam's attempted escape from Loughville. Below: The scene as it appeared in the film, Sam (Stuart Whitman) battles his way through a seething mass of ghouls. Inset below: Bolton's original concept for the Inkeeper (Patrick Magee), a considerably more horrific depiction than the final result. Opposite top left: The final frames of the comic strip version. Opposite top right: R. Chetwynd-Haynes (John Carradine) listens spellbound to Erasmus (Vincent Price) as he weaves his tales of terror. Opposite below: Erasmus pleads his case for the acceptance of a Human into the ranks of the Monster Club. Opposite below inset: Bolton's visualization of a vampire.

SO SAM ONCE MORE ESCUED  
OUT OF THE TUN AND ONCE MORE  
FOUND HIS WAY BASED



BUT THIS TIME HE WOULD NOT BE  
STOPPED SO EASILY!

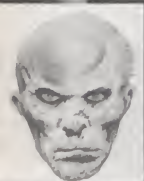


Photo by Phil Edwards

took the part.

ITC and Milton Subotsky were keen to have some kind of presentation for the all important Cannes Film Festival of 1980, but time was against them, so the usual promotional reel was out of the question. Subotsky, long a keen collector and fan of comics, decided that a promotional comic book was the answer. Not only could the complete form and style of the film be shown, but potential distributors would have something to take away with them from the festival, other than a few boozy memories and a sickly produced synopsis sheet.

Subotsky contacted Dez Skinn, founder and ex-editor of *Starburst* and *House of Hammer* magazines. Skinn wrote the strip script and employed John Bolton to illustrate the bulk of the story and paint the wraparound cover. With the deadline looming ever closer it became necessary to employ another artist, David Lloyd, to illustrate *Mother Married a Vampire*, the final story in the anthology.

The comic book, published by Skinn's

*Pioneer Press* and printed on the high quality paper, was limited to a print run of 1000 copies. With over half that number given away at Cannes and another two hundred to exhibitors at a Torquay conference, the remainder quickly became sought-after collectors' items.

Impressed by Bolton's work, Subotsky further employed him in designing a chart to illustrate Chetwynd-Hayes complicated cross-breed monster genealogy. Working in oils, Bolton toiled around the clock, completing the 4 x 3 foot painting in a matter of weeks. On the last day of shooting the painting was stolen from the set and extensive police enquiries have failed to locate the picture.

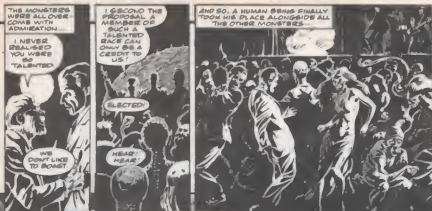
Subotsky also utilised Bolton's skills in one of the stories within the film. Rather than employ actors for a flashback sequence in the ghoul story, the producer had Bolton render a series of engraving-like sketches for the scene. The result lends an eerie effect to the story. It is also the cover for the promotional comic

book which forms the background for the end credits for *The Monster Club*.

So it seemed that *The Monster Club* was to be a return to the anthology format films which Milton Subotsky had so successfully produced for Amicus. But the producer wanted something more for this film, something to set it outside what he had done before. He decided that what the film needed was music. With Graham Walker, head of ATV Scores, he went ahead scouting talent from the London rock scene. The perennial *Pretty Things* were signed as were two new groups, *The Viewers* and *Night*. Successful solo singer B.A. Robertson was also commissioned to write and perform a song in the film, *I'm Just a Sucker for Your Love*. Selected classical pieces were also chosen and rearranged for background music, the most notable being *Wiener Blut* performed by John Williams and Sky.

Shooting of *The Monster Club* ran smoothly, a trade mark of most of the films that Subotsky has been associated with. Unika





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Photo by Phil Edwards

many producers he prefers to hire the talent and let them get on with the work. Rarely on the set, he prefers to keep his meetings with the director confined to viewings of the rushes.

It is during the editing that Subotsky takes an active part in the structuring of the film. It is the part of the film-making process which vitally interests the producer. He started his career in films buying the rights to Thirties B features, re-editing them to half-hour featurettes and selling them to television stations in America. When it comes to cutting films to essentials and keeping the story flowing at a fast pace he is completely ruthless. It doesn't matter how much time and money has been spent on a scene, if it slows down the pace and doesn't add to the story or characterisation, out it goes.

A good case in point in *The Monster Club* is the *Shadmoek* story. When the Barbara Kellermann character returns to her flat, having incurred the wrath and deadly whistle of the *Shadmoek*, she is seen to melt, dying horribly.

Make-up artists Ashton and Gasser had fashioned a series of masks showing the stage of the melting. In the final stage a wax dummy was substituted. The sequence took several hours to film. In the editing process it was discovered that the series of lap dissolves didn't work, pacing wise, and the scene was kept to two brief cuts which, while still getting the horror across, doesn't slow the drive of the story.

The film completed, it was sent to the censor for classification. Subotsky was hopeful of an A certificate and had deliberately kept the horror sequences to a minimum and the physical violence was virtually non-existent. However when the censor saw the film he gave it an AA certificate, thereby denying it to the very audience for which Subotsky made it. The producer appealed and a special test screening was arranged for an audience of children.

It was the ghoul story which the censor objected to as it was about cannibals, a subject definitely not worthy of the family A certificate. As Subotsky pointed out the censor,

ghouls are *not* cannibals. Rather, they are a supernatural threat. When one considers the films which are given A certificate, like *Jaws* with its bloody limb severings and air of constant menace, or the *James Bond* films which are little more than glossy wall-to-wall violence glorification, the censor's decision seemed somewhat arbitrary.

*The Monster Club* finally received an A classification, much to Subotsky's delight. The censor did require one cut however and, oddly, not from the once-objectional ghoul story. The brief scene deleted is the second shot of the melting Barbara Kellermann, or rather the wax dummy stand-in.

When I spoke to Subotsky during the editing of the film he was pleased with the finished result and commented, "I think *The Monster Club* is something different in films. I like to think of it as an 'entertainment' rather than a horror film. It's really a variety show of sorts, with the three short horror stories being just part of the show."

# BRAVE

It is six hundred years in the future. A population of young, healthy, contented citizens live in a scientific utopia dedicated to technology. The people are split into five classes, from the Alpha Plus intellectuals who are pre-conditioned to assume leadership, to the Epsilon Minus morons who, with a smile and a song, accept that their most important function is to sweep up.

There is religion too. God's name is Henry Ford, worshipped for creating the assembly line which mass produces everything including babies in plastic bags. The image of their god is a Model T and people blaspheme, "Oh, my Ford!"

There is no war, disease or poverty and people regard nature and the family unit as obscure. Beauty and relationships cause unhappiness and inefficiency.

This is how people will exist six hundred years from now in their *Brave New World*, as envisioned by Aldous Huxley in his literary science-fiction classic, *Brave New World*, filmed by MCA-tv for their *Best Sellers* series.

In 1932 Huxley created on paper a Utopian society which, in many respects, reflects today's society. If a person feels run-down he pops an "Amphi-pep". If he's of a nervous disposition he takes a "Soma pill". However, life in the *Brave New World* stretches today's luxuries to the limits. Children take classes in "nature nausea" which teaches the contented student that nature is bad. Instead they learn that life is constantly pleasurable with free love relationships, wastefulness and mindless conformity as the norm.

*Brave New World* has never before been filmed. That doesn't mean it has been ignored by film-makers. Back in the early sixties independent producer Samuel Bronston was actively engaged in preparing a massive production, which he called Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*, to be made on a scale compared to his previous epics like *El Cid* and *The Fall Of The Roman Empire*. But by 1965 he was broke and the long-awaited largest science-fiction epic ever was grounded.

With the advent of the telemovie and oh-so-successful mini series, more and more best sellers found a celluloid outlet that before had been possible. Producer Jacqueline Babbitt, who won an Emmy for her highly acclaimed telemovie *Sybil* in 1977, saw the possibility of transforming the Huxley novel into an effective mini-series, allowing the lengthy plot to run a full four hours.

It was filmed in 1978 with Keir Dullea heading the cast as Dr Thomas Grahmbell, Director of Hatcheries (where in this world babies come from). With his friend Linda (Julie Cobb), he visits the Savage Reservation to study the lower forms of human life. He inadvertently leaves her there where she subsequently bears his son, which in the *Brave New World* is an



unthinkable occurrence.

Grahmbell blunders a second time when, owing to an error in the baby-making process, an Alpha Plus, Bernard Marx (Bud Cort), is produced endowed with special sensibilities rendering him a misfit in society.

Mustapha Mond (Ron Ely), the Western World Controller, takes a special interest in Bernard and permits him to visit the savage land where he discovers Grahmbell's son, now a young man who has educated himself by reading Shakespeare and is himself a misfit in a primitive society.

Burt Brinckerhoff, one of America's

top tv directors, directed the screenplay by Robert E. Thompson at the Universal Studios and on location throughout Southern California. In keeping with Huxley's concept, the film satirizes our contemporary trends with humour.

The film provides Keir Dullea with his third excursion into the unknown realms of sf, and in the case of 2001: A Space Odyssey it really was a case of not knowing much about anything. In a meeting with Dullea he told me, "You'll remember I played this astronaut who had all these incredible things happen to him but who didn't know what was going on. Like that astronaut, I didn't know

# NEW WORLD



what was going on either."

His second sf movie was the greatly underrated and sadly unsuccessful *Welcome to Blood City*, a sort of *West-world* where the killings were for real and only the strongest survived. It can be paralleled with *Brave New World* in that both films are about a controlled society but with different results.

Whereas *2001* was filmed in England and *Blood City* was made in Canada, *Brave New World* kept Dullea close to home which was a godsend for an actor with an aversion to flying.

"There was a time," he points out, "when I refused to fly anywhere and that

was when I was filming *2001*. I was in good company, too, because Stanley Kubrick wouldn't fly either, nor would my co-star Gary Lockwood. So there we were, the three of us working in millions of miles of space and none of us would even get in an aeroplane."

*Brave New World* also marks the end of Keir's self-imposed 8-year hiatus from American television when, plagued by type-casting, he decided he needed to break away from the intensely dramatic roles he was forever playing. He desperately wanted a comedy role and settled into semi-retirement, doing only films and theatre, until one came his way.

"Buried deep inside of me is a Jack Lemmon," he claims.

And so he was delighted with his role of Dr Thomas Grahmbell which has many comedic overtones and allows Keir the opportunity to do some television comedy at last.

Such decisions are not left to agents or managers. Dullea has guided his own career with "no regrets . . . I must believe in my work."

His decision to end his 8-year absence from telly and do *Brave New World* to satisfy his own desire to make people laugh may well have opened up a new world for him.

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# VIDEO SCENE

by PETER CARGIN

**Starburst** newcomer Peter Cargin looks at the world of video cassette recorders and examines some of the problems that can be encountered.

I was watching *Sterecrash* recently on my tv set, yes the little (yet) seen movie starring Marjoe Gortner, Christopher Plummer and many men's fantasy poppet, Caroline Munro. This is an obvious rip-off of the Star Wars syndrome, including light guns, friendly robots etc, made in Italian studios by Lewis Coates. It has a dignified performance by Plummer as the good Emperor and some music by John Barry holding things together from time to time — but not much more going for it!

Now some of you may be wondering when and where was this scheduled among the many, many movies we get on tv these days — perhaps on some remote ITV station like the Channel Isles. Well no, it was on my own Channel Four, the blank one (at the moment) but with a video cassette playing on my VHS Video Recorder and feeding pictures into my television set. Maybe you're one of the 300,000 people with a cassette recorder — if so what follows will probably be pretty familiar to you; apologies folks, but you have to start somewhere.

After many false starts, the video field has really started to grow and is now a meaningful area of the entertainment market, both for those selling and those buying. It's no longer the home of old old movies — in the States 20th Century-Fox have put out a cassette of *9 To 5*, the new Jane Fonda movie, two and a half months after its release in the cinemas.

## What You Can Do

A Video Cassette Recorder is similar to a reel-to-reel audio tape recorder except that the tapes are a little larger (but they're working on that) and the machines are rather heavier (but they're getting more portable). You can buy blank tapes, about £9 for three hours of VHS tape, and record visuals off your tv set for later playback and viewing. You can also record a programme on one channel whilst watching a programme on another, eliminating the programmes on at the same time. VCRs have timing devices, generally up to at least a week ahead, which allow you to pre-set a programme (a) so that the recording can take place while you are away from the equipment. It also means that you don't have to stay up into the early hours of the morning to see that favourite old movie — you can play it next morning and have your own Breakfast tv Show now.

If you think you'll make use of them, there are various extras available in most systems which allow you to play your tapes in slow motion, fast motion or even freeze the picture to a still — you can also find a particular piece of action very quickly with various "search" mechanisms.

## Television Systems

Now you probably know that American tv is different from ours, yes I don't mean just worse, but technically Britain and most of Western world are on the PAL system, the exceptions being France (of course), Portugal and Yugoslavia who used a system called SECAM. All the others, that is the United States, Canada, Japan, Taiwan and the Philippines use the NTSC system (rudely known as Never The Same Colour). Now this means that you cannot swap a pre-recorded tape or indeed an off-air programme you have recorded with someone abroad unless they use the same system.

Another major factor is the incompatibility of video recorders; unlike audio tapes or film you cannot play any tape on any VCR, even in the same country.



## Three Video Systems

There are basically three systems of video on the market. The VHS system which I mentioned before, (Vertical Helical Scan), which is Japanese and is manufactured under the National and Panasonic names. (JVC is really the same thing from another Japanese company). This is, in this country, the market leader in machines and tape. Moving up but some way behind still is another Japanese system, Betamax, developed by Sony (there's also something called Betacord from Senyo, which is similar and competitive).

Finally from Europe, the Dutch firm of Philips, who brought out some of the earliest machines using their own system Philips 1500, (now defunct) and Philips 1700, (going defunct) have now introduced, after something of a hiatus, the Video 2000 system (which should be competitive with a Grundig version).

Now you pay your money and takes your choice — improvements are going on all the time and once you've gone in for one system you'll have to basically stick to it, 'cause if you don't you'll have to have all your tapes changed

into the new system — a costly and time-consuming operation.

See what your friends are going to get or have, if you are thinking of swapping.

## Prices, Rental Tapes.

All three systems are going to be around for some time and you can buy machines from most hi-fi shops or department stores — prices range from about £400 for a basic machine with no frills to £700 for the latest piece of technology incorporating all the most recent advances. Of course you can also rent machines, now from the same places that rent tv sets, (some will give you a better deal if you're already a rental customer) on average £18-£20 per month for most sets. By the way, the VCR uses relatively little electricity and are fairly easy to set up — although you should have no problem asking the people you're buying or renting from to come and fix it for you.

Blank tapes can be obtained in different systems, VHS, Beta or Philips 2000 and will give you 1 hour, 2 hour or 3 hours (VHS) a little extra on Beta and up to 8 hours on Philips 2000 (this is a turn over tape, like audio, having 4 hours each side). Again with continuing technical advances there's not much to choose, as VHS now have a 4 hour tape.

## No Copying but . . .

Now you may have noticed reference in all the Video hardware adverts to "the 1956 Copyright Act" and how you "may have to obtain consent before taping material off-air!" Now although you can copy BBC or IBA broadcasts for private purposes, the material you copy will almost certainly contain something you may not copy without clearance. Of course to actually obtain the appropriate consent would be virtually impossible — so you may wonder what are all the 300,000 people with VCR's doing? Not all have bought them for pre-recorded material which is perfectly okay — no as even the legal authorities recognise it would be impossible to enforce a law which meant entering people's homes and checking what they had been recording. So long as you do it for private purposes, in your own home and don't intend or actually make any money out of a recording you make, you should have no problems. In due course there'll probably be a levy on both audio and visual tapes.

None of these possible problems apply in the legitimate pre-recorded video market, particularly from the point of view of fantasy material available. (If you are more interested in this side then VHS or Betamax are the systems to aim for).

*If you are interested in further information about video recorders and reports on all the latest movies available on tape, drop us a line at Starburst and let us know!*

In the second part of our interview with the author of *Hitch Hikers Guide to the Galaxy* and *Restaurant at the End of the Universe*, John Fleming talks to the writer about the different versions of his story that have been produced.

**Starburst:** *Why is it you feel that the stage production of Hitch Hikers Guide at the Rainbow Theatre [London] was "a fiasco"?*

Adams: The first two productions had worked well largely because they'd been performed to relatively intimate audiences. The I.C.A. [*Institute of Contemporary Arts, London*] was only 80 and I suppose the largest Theatre Clwyd audience was about 400. But you put it in something the size of The Rainbow — a 3000-seater theatre — and, because *Hitch-Hiker* tends to be rather slow-moving and what is important is all the detail along the way... You put it in something that size and the first thing that goes straight out the window is all the detail. So you then fill it up with earthquake effects and lasers and things. That further swamps the detail and so every thing was constantly being pushed in exactly the wrong direction and all the poor actors were stuck on the stage desperately trying to get noticed by the audience across this vast distance. If you'd put the numbers we were getting at The Rainbow into a West End theatre, they would have been terrific audiences — 700 a night or whatever. But, in a 3000-seat theatre, 700 is not a lot,

particularly when you (the producers) are paying for 3000 seats. So the whole thing was a total financial disaster. *There was also talk of a film.* Well, I've been into that twice and each time I've backed out. I knew we were going to be doing it for BBC-TV anyway and I knew we could do it all on telly. In the first film deal that was being set up, the American guy who was going to be directing it... I began to feel we were

talking about different things and he wanted to make *Star Wars* with jokes. We seemed to be talking about different things and one thing after another seemed not quite right and I suddenly realised that the only reason I was going ahead with it was the money. And that, as the *sole* reason, was not a good enough reason. Although I have to get rather drunk in order to believe that. *[Laughter]* It had got to the stage where



VOGON SHIP.

Left: Mervin the Paranoid Android, a character from the *Hitch Hikers Guide*. Above: A member of the catering race, *The Dentrassi*, who serve as the in-flight caterers on Vogon demolition vessels. Right: A Vogon demolition ship. The ship hovers above Eerth in the opening moments of *Hitch Hikers Guide to the Galaxy* and announces to Eerth that the planet is about to be demolished to make way for an interstellar by-pass. All sketches by BBC tv visual effects designer Jim Frances. Top left: Our title lettering is taken from the cover of that remarkable book *The Hitch Hikers Guide to the Galaxy*, which has, inscribed on its cover in large friendly lettering, the words "Don't Panic". Top right: Author Douglas Adams.



I just had to sign a piece of paper and would instantly have £50,000 up-front, so I was quite pleased with myself for not doing that. So, I thought *There's no point in doing a film at the moment*. Then the whole thing re-opened when Terry Jones of *Monty Python*, who's a great friend of mine, said he'd like to think about making a film of *Hitch-Hiker*. So I thought *That sounds like a nice idea* but the original idea was to do something

based fairly solidly round that first radio series and I just didn't want to do that *again*. I'd done it on radio, on stage, on record, in a book and was now doing it on television. It just seemed a *pointless* waste of time to do the same story again on film. So we then thought it would be much more worthwhile to do a new story. But then we had the problem of having to do a story which was, on the one hand, totally consistent with what

had gone before for those who knew what had happened and, on the other hand, totally self-contained for the sake of those who didn't. And that began to be a terrible conundrum and I just couldn't solve it. So, in the end, Terry and I just said "It'd be nice to do a film together, but let's just start from scratch again and not make a *Hitch-Hiker*."

*I was surprised when I first heard about the tv series and the film because I thought the series was un-visualisable.* Well, obviously, there are things you lose when you move onto television in that what you actually see *restricts* what you imagine whereas, on radio, what you hear *provokes* what you imagine. On the other hand, there are all sorts of things I think *are* worthwhile. One of the great strengths of the television series is those wonderful animated graphics. If you'd been sitting down to do something like *Hitch-Hiker* for television to begin with, there are all sorts of things it wouldn't have occurred to you to do. Like having a narrator who talks all the time: you just don't normally have that on television. But we were committed to that because of its success on radio. Having to translate something from one medium to another, you have to find solutions to problems which normally wouldn't have posed themselves. Finding those solutions is interesting and that's how we got those graphics. If you were doing a BBC television programme normally, you would just not gratuitously attempt to have one character with two heads. It just poses far too many problems. But, being committed to that, we had to do it. So they built this head which is a quite



remarkable construction. It's moulded from Mark Wing-Davey's own head and the neck movement side-to-side and up-and-down, the eye and the mouth and the eyebrow and the cheek are all radio-controlled. It's an extraordinary feat. Something you would not have got except in the process of translating one medium to another. You're committed to things you otherwise wouldn't have tackled.

*Like those wonderful computer read-outs for the book.*

The computer read-outs are all animated. I'd assumed one would do it as computer graphics and actually use a real computer to do it, but apparently that is incredibly expensive. So it was done by animation, which is more effective.

*I saw the completed version of the first episode at the Edinburgh Television Festival way back in August. Why was it finished so early? Because it was a pilot?* Well, a sort of pilot. "Pilot" can mean several things. In some cases, a pilot episode is made and broadcast to see how the audience reacts to it. This was a different sort of pilot. The BBC had said *We're committed to doing the series. But we want to do the first one separately so we can see we're doing it right. And then we have the opportunity of changing things.* In fact, that isn't quite how it worked out. When the bills came in for the first programme, there was a certain amount of stunned shock and back-peddling on whether or not they were going to do the rest of the series. Then they said *Yes, we will go ahead, but try to be a little more careful.* (Laughs) *One of the most popular characters is*



Above: Monty Python's Graham Chapman and Roger Briarly as they appeared in the BBC tv comedy show *Out of the Trees*. Below: Chapman and Briarly as the mighty Ghengis Khan and son from *Out of the Trees*. Right: The cast of the BBC Radio series *The Burkiss Way* (clockwise from top left) Fred Harris, Nigel Rees, Jo Kendall and Chris Emmett. Far right: The incredible Zaphod Beeblebrox as seen in the stage play of *Hitch Hikers Guide to the Galaxy*.

*Martin the Paranoid Android. I believe he came from a specific...*

Yes, Andrew Marshall. He's one of the writers of *The Burkiss Way* and *End of Part One*. He co-wrote the radio series *Hordes of the Things* with John Lloyd, which was a sort of parody of *Lord of the Rings*. Very silly.

*You're really part of a third generation of Cambridge comedy writers. There was the Beyond The Fringe and TW3 lot. Then*

*the I'm Sorry I'll Read That Again, Goodies and Monty Python lot. And now there's The Burkiss Way, End of Part One, Not The Nine O'Clock News, Hitch-Hiker and so on. The generation after Monty Python.*

I suppose so. But in that generation one major programme sat on the top of the pile, which was Python. I think all my way through Cambridge I desperately wanted that to happen all over again. I







wanted to function as part of a group of writer-performers. But, you see, a radical change had come over the way things were organised. In those days — the time that produced Python — the writer-performer was the kingpin. That was true in *Footlights* and in the shows that those guys then went on to do. So it was the guys themselves who were doing it and they came together and a producer was given to them just to get it onto the screen and make it work. In my day, *The Footlights* had become a producer's show. So a producer is there to say what the show is going to be — a student producer or, more likely, someone who was at Cambridge two years previously who's come back to do it. He says *I want so-and-so in it and I want so-and-so to write it* and they're appointed and the producer calls the tune. I think that's wrong. That's what's true in *Not The Nine O'Clock News*. I'll get into trouble for saying this but I think that's wrong: it just makes it slightly too artificial. My year in the Cambridge Footlights was full of immensely talented people who never actually got the chance to really work together properly, because they were all working for somebody else rather than getting together. So it was very fragmented and you get on the one hand *Hitch-Hiker*, which is written by one person with actors employed to do it, and on the other hand *Not The Nine O'Clock News*, which is a producer's show being sort of driven from the back seat. And there's nothing central that has come out of my Cambridge generation.

*How many years of your life have you spent on Hitch-Hiker now?*



*Four. The first time it actually crept into my life was the end of 1976.*

*Are you actually interested in science fiction?*

Yes and no. I always thought I was interested until I discovered this enormous sub-culture and met people and found I knew nothing about it whatsoever. I always used to enjoy reading the odd science fiction book. Having done *Hitch-Hiker* and *Dr Who* for this length of

time, I now find it virtually impossible to read science fiction, which is simply a measure of the extent of which I've been saturated with it. I'm a bit nervous, at the moment, of being pigeon-holed as a science fiction writer, which I'm not. I'm a comedy writer who happens to be in science fiction.

*There's the double problem that you're thought of as a science fiction person and as a comedy writer. So, if you wanted to*

write a serious book...

I don't think I could do a serious book anyway: jokes would start to creep in. *You're not like a stand-up comic who, deep down, wants to play Hamlet?* No, you see, I actually think comedy's a serious business, although I may not give that impression. I was being interviewed the other day by a woman from the *Telegraph Magazine* who'd read the new book (*The Restaurant at the End of The Universe*) and was asking me all sorts of questions and I was being fairly flippant about it and I think she got rather disappointed, because she expected me to be much more serious about it than I was being. I think that comes about because, when you're actually working on something, you have to take it absolutely seriously; you have to be totally, passionately committed to it. But you can't maintain that if you're going to stay sane. So, on the whole, when I talk about it to other people I tend then to be quite flippant about it. Because I'm just so glad to have got through it. (Laughs) You say *Ah well, it's just that. It's just jokes.* She was saying she thought the second book was much weightier than the first, which surprised me. I wasn't aware of that.

*Presumably the reason the first book didn't include the last two episodes of the original radio series was that you hadn't totally written them yourself and you weren't totally happy with them.*

Yes. I also wanted to keep those last two episodes for the end of the second book. *Were you not totally happy with the second radio series?*

No. You see, the first series was written and re-written and re-written and worked on very, very heavily. The second series I



Above: *The Doctor* (Tom Baker) and his assistant *Romana* (Mary Tamm) as seen in the *Doctor Who* episode *The Pirate Planet*, written by Douglas Adams. Below: The team of Tom Baker (as the Doctor), Graham Williams (producer) and Douglas Adams (script editor) transformed the *Doctor Who* tv show into a whimsical comedy series.

had to do under immense pressure while I was doing other things as well. There was an element of desperation in writing it. Also, the first time round, it was my own, private little world which only I really knew about. Writing the sequel series was like running round the street naked because suddenly it's become everyone else's property as well. Most of the second series was first draft, as opposed to fourth draft. So about 2/3 of the second book actually comes from

episodes 5 and 6 of the first series. The first 1/3 of it was a re-structured plotting of aspects of the second series. I think it works out better like that, although it meant I had to write the book backwards I couldn't get the thing started and it held me up and held me up and held me up and eventually I wrote the last bit, then the bit before that and the bit before that — and the beginning was worked out, more or less, by a process of elimination. *It's all been very successful, though.*

I now have a company and everything goes through the company. It's called Serious Productions. I decided most people I know with companies had silly names for them, so I decided I wasn't. I was going to have a Serious name. *How do you get out of the trap of being forever 'The man who wrote Hitch-Hiker's Guide to the Galaxy'?*

Well, by doing something else, really. I think we'll probably do a second tv series although it's by no means certain. I think it's on the cards and, if we did, then it would be a totally new series written for television rather than adapted. And that, as far as I'm concerned, would be the end of *Hitch-Hiker*.

*And you would go on to...*

I want to write a book from scratch to prove that I can do it. I've now written two books which are based on something I'd already written. That's not quite kosher. And I would like to write a stage-play because that was the one failure *Hitch-Hiker* had. And I'd like to write a film. These are all fairly wishy-washy ideas at the moment, but that's what I'd like to do... Oh, and I'd like to be a guitarist.



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# IT'S ONLY A MOVIE

In a recent issue of *Variety* there was a long article about why less British people are going to the cinema each year, unlike America where annual cinema admissions are on the increase. Various reasons were put forward including the fact that the most common complaints made by cinema goers (mainly in the provinces) centred on discomfort, offhandedness by the management, noise, dirt and danger. True, these are all legitimate complaints but there is another reason why going to a British cinema can be such an ordeal and it involves the three most chilling words in the English language — "Full Supporting Programme".

I get to see movies under two entirely different sets of circumstances — as a film reviewer and as an ordinary cinema-goer. Now when you go to a preview screening all you see is the film itself. It's an amazing experience — you go in, sit down, the lights go out and, lo and behold, the film actually starts right away. Now I know this all sounds pretty far-fetched but it's true! Readers who are members of the National Film Theatre or other private cinema clubs will know what I'm talking about. But what happens when you pay to see a movie in a commercial cinema? Well, it's a long story . . .

The first thing you do is try to figure out if there's a way of completely avoiding the dreaded "Full Supporting Programme". If the movie is a really popular one this is difficult to achieve because if you wait until the main feature is just about to start the chances are the cinema will be full up (and, of course, most cinemas won't let you buy your ticket and come back later). There's also the added problem that some cinema managements don't like you to know exactly when the film will be starting and go to great lengths to keep that vital piece of information a secret. And even if you succeed in extracting it they win in the end because, invariably, the film never starts on time . . . with the result that you walk in just as the adverts are beginning to roll.

So okay, let's presume the movie you've decided to see is a popular one and you can expect a full house. That means you've been forced to go in before the programme begins. And as you sit there in the auditorium you will hear, if you're in an Odeon, a bland, disembodied voice welcoming you to the cinema and warning you not to leave your handbag on the floor. Apparently, as soon as the lights go out, hordes of thieves start

crawling around under the seats snatching handbags, or perhaps they use long poles with hooks on the end? For years now I have kept a wary eye out for groping hands appearing from under the seats but so far to no avail.

The tone of the voice that delivers this warning is quite unique — it sounds like a Speak-Your-Weight machine that's been to a British public school. It's also very patronising and gives the impression that it's aimed at an audience with an average mental age of 5 (I notice that it never fails to provoke titters from the tourists in London cinemas).

Finally the lights dim and the torture begins. First comes the dreaded "featurette" which is either a British-made travelogue or a New Zealand Film Unit production about glaciers or tapestry weaving. This will probably only last for about 20 minutes but always seems a little longer — about 99 years.

The mind-crushing banality of most of these travelogues is almost beyond belief and prolonged exposure to them can cause irreversible brain damage. Part of the reason they are so appalling is that there is no financial incentive for their makers to spend any time or money on them because all the distributors will pay per film is about £2,000. Therefore the usual way of making them is to send someone with a camera on a free trip to some tourist spot, courtesy of a desperate tourist bureau or airline. The lucky person takes a few shots out of the window of his taxi on the way to the hotel and hey presto, a travelogue is born. When the film arrives back home someone else spends about 5 minutes writing the accompanying narration. There's a real art to writing this kind of stuff — the aim being to include as many clichés as you possibly can. You lose points if you accidentally include an original viewpoint, a serious observation or anything approaching genuine wit. (Would the person who said it sounds like one of my film reviews meet me outside afterwards?) Usually it's the owner of the film company who writes the narration, or his wife (or vice versa, I hastily add for the sake of our feminist readers).

Traditionally the end of the featurette is marked by a burst of applause from the audience, not because they liked it but because they're so relieved it's over . . .

After this comes the trailers, the other aspect of the "full supporting programme" that I actually enjoy. Trailers are an art-form in themselves and I love even watching trailers for films that I know are bad. However, I'm aware that

not everyone shares my enthusiasm and I will admit that sometimes you get hit with too many of them in one sitting.

But then comes the ultimate horror — the commercials. This may come as a shock to many British readers but the custom of force-feeding cinema patrons with a long series of ads, sometimes lasting over 10 minutes, is almost a purely British one though it has taken root in a few of the ex-colonies. For instance, the first time I encountered the phenomenon of Pearl and Dean was in Singapore. As I sat watching a stream of ads for local products (Coca Cola etc) I presumed Pearl and Dean was a local company and that the idea of bombarding the audience with hard-sell before the movie was a sinister oriental invention.

Imagination my shock-horror-surprise when I arrived in England and discovered that Pearl and Dean was here as well. In Australia it was different — you got one filmed ad before the feature but most of the advertising was done using slides during the interval. It's been a long time since I was in the USA but I can't remember much advertising in American cinemas, either (any American readers care to verify that?).

Admittedly some of the commercials are well done, but after you've seen them a few times they do get rather boring. And when you've seen them a hundred times, which is possible if you're a frequent cinema-goer, sitting through them becomes a form of sophisticated mental torture (I swear if I see the one where the cowboy drags his jeans through town behind his horse I'll go berserk — I may even throw paint at the screen).

Well, the ads finally come to an end and you start to relax, but that's a mistake because then you have to endure all the ads for the confectionery on sale at the theatre, some of which were apparently shot back in the time of Queen Victoria and prove Martin Scorsese's theory about the deterioration of colour film over a period of years.

Then it's interval time and if it's an Odeon back comes that infuriating voice to warn you that the feature film doesn't have an interval and that if you want refreshments you'd better get moving now. *Good Lord!* you cry, leaping from your seat, *no interval! A movie without an interval! What a shocking idea!* Then you sit down again when you remember that the last movie you saw that had an interval was *The Ten Commandments* back in 1957 and that you'll probably survive a 1½ or 2 hour film without experiencing an overwhelming desire for a



cup of ghastly orange cordial or a boiled hot dog. However all the people around you are made of weaker stuff — they are all heading for the confectionary lady where they will buy tons of rubbish wrapped in a substance that has been especially designed to make sounds like gun shots whenever it's touched.

The interval drags on. Days pass. Vultures gather in the rafters while the cinema manager awaits the signal that they've sold X amount of ice cream. Finally, reluctantly, and with a heavy heart, he gives the projectionist the okay to roll the film you paid a small fortune to see. The movie begins but you can't see it because tears of gratitude have welled up in your eyes... it seems so long ago since you bought your ticket and entered the cinema. So much has happened — you're older and different now. In fact you've changed so much in your tastes and outlook on life that you probably no longer have any desire to see this picture anymore. So you get up and leave...

Okay, I've exaggerated a little but it's not too far from the truth. I honestly

think that the average British cinema-goer leaves the theatre thinking about the gauntlet of boredom he had to go through in order to see the movie. Now your movie addict, like me, just grits his or her teeth and puts up with it but surely the casual cinema-goer, the one who may go about 6 or 8 times a year, is more likely to say — why bother? And it's these casual patrons that the British industry is losing year by year.

But when you accuse distributors over all this patronising rubbish and hard-sell they inflict on their customers they defend themselves by claiming that without the revenue from the advertising and the confectionary sales they couldn't afford to keep their cinemas open. Well, that argument has become rather redundant because the cinemas are closing down anyway. The industry is in dire straits in this country and it's possible that one of the two main distributors, Rank, will pull out of film distribution and exhibition completely. So what have they got to lose? Why don't they take a gamble and scrap all the garbage? Why don't they drop their out-

dated approach to film exhibition which surely has its origins in pre-television days? Because if they don't hurry up and do it soon they're not going to have any customers left at all. As *Variety* puts it "... if admissions continue to drop (in Britain) ... the marketing of pix theatrically might well become a minority pursuit, akin to the showcasing of an opera or a ballet."

I had hoped, in this issue, to begin my 100,000 word treatise entitled 'George Lucas and the Bathtub' in which I prove, with the aid of charts, diagrams and graphs, that George Lucas did indeed invent the Force while having a bath one morning and that contrary to the claim made by a reader in *Starburst* 30 the Force was not based on the Tao. After extensive research I have pinpointed the exact date and time of the bath in question. I will also prove that Yoda was not based on the legendary Chinese Methuselah P'eng Tzu (real name Chien Kieng) but was actually Miss Piggy in a clever disguise. But you will all have to be patient...



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# TV ZONE

**T**he column, this time out, will *not* be looking at Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy because I intend to leave that for an upcoming issue, when all the episodes have aired.

This time I will focus my "churning-up-the-past" attention on what I consider one of the all-time great horror-fantasy tveee shows — Kolchak. *The Night Stalker*. I'm not too sure if the series was ever telecast in Britain (I've been informed that it may have been seen in some parts) but, some years back, I was fortunate enough to coincide a visit to New York during the series' first showing on American television. Since that time I have also caught up with the two tele-features/pilots, *The Night Stalker* and *The Night Strangler* — which have been widely seen in the United Kingdom.

Based on Jeff Rice's previously unpublished *The Kolchak Papers*, *The Night Stalker* tele-movie premiered on US tv on the evening of January 11, 1972, and scored a record 75,000,000 viewer-attendance. The property had been with *Dark Shadows* producer Dan Curtis for a couple of years until he decided to dust it off and hand it to Richard Matheson, one of the genre's top scriptsmiths. Matheson developed the story of an aging, cynical newshawk pursuing a modern-day vampire in Las Vegas into a top-notch, high-energy fantasy thriller — earning the movie both the Edgar and Writers' Guild awards. *The Night Stalker* introduced the over-inquisitive character of reporter Carl Kolchak, via the excellent portrayal of Darren McGavin. Kolchak is an over-the-hill newspaperman who has slipped down the ladder from a big New York newspaper to a local Las Vegas daily. It is through his pursuits in trying for that "big one", that big scoop which is going to take him back up the ladder that Kolchak comes across the series of vampire murders.

Inspired by the wholly unexpected network success of *The Night Stalker*, Dan Curtis produced a sequel the following year: January 16, 1973 premiered *The Night Strangler* — also scripted by Matheson and starring once again McGavin as Carl Kolchak. Also carried over from the previous movie was Simon Oakland as Kolchak's editor Tony Vincenzo, an ulcer-ridden character with little time for Kolchak's remblings about the supernatural. *The Night Strangler* is set in Seattle, where the central characters are now based. Kolchak "accidentally" comes across a series of strangulation murders and discovers that the murders have been duplicated every 21 years for more than a century. Needless to say, city editor Vincenzo is not the least bit interested in Kolchak's theories. However, Kolchek doggedly chases his story, leading him on a bizarre hunt into Seattle's underground city (an underground city which, incidentally, does exist, streets and stores intact since the late nineteenth century).

The final third of the movie, with Kolchak hunting the "monster" which has learned to conquer death by killing others, is scary as hell.

McGavin became so involved with the Kolchek character that he went on to produce a one-hour series under his own company banner of Francy Productions, in association with ABC-TV and Universal Television. On September 13, 1974, *Kolchak: The Night Stalker* opens I with *The Ripper*, penned by Rudolph Borchert and directed by Allen Baron.

Kolchek and Vincenzo are now based in Chicago, working in the offices of International News Service. (A nice touch in the series, if you include the two movies, is that following each Kolchak revelation of the "dark world of demons" he is chased out of town by the authorities — editor Vincenzo, presumably, along with him.)

The series format was that each week Kolchak would come up against some "monster" — from werewolf to succubus, from prehistoric creature to a monster from Indian mythology. Along with each case came the denial and total unacceptance of such things by the police, city authorities and Tony Vincenzo. Even with the ultimate visual proof that a zombie stalks the dark alleyways of Chicago or the original Jack the Ripper is et large in the modern-day city Kolchek's "scoop" is suppressed by the city authorities. However, following these fantastic events Kolchak wasn't,

**This month, regular column the clock back to 1974 and Kolchak: The**



Journalist Tise Vahimagi turns  
and looks at the US tv series,  
Night Stalker.



for a change, driven out of the city and the series lasted for twenty episodes ('74-'75 season).

Kolchak: The Night Stalker is not purely and simply a series about monsters, vampires and vampire-killers. It is a series harbouring a strong element of cynicism, paranoia, professional frustration, bureaucratic equilibrium and, above all, that the world is not necessarily round — despite what they tell you.

Part of *The Night Stalker* paperback book introductions gives two wonderful, theme-setting quotes: "Socially, a journalist fits in somewhere between a whore and a bartender. But spiritually he stands beside Galileo. He knows the world is round." — Sherman Reilly Duffy, *Chicago Daily Journal*. "Socially, I fit in just fine between the whore and the bartender — both are close friends. And I *knew* the world was round. I then discovered *flat*, and that there are things dark and terrible waiting just over the edge to reach out and snatch life from the unlucky wanderer." — Carl Kolchak, *Las Vegas Daily News*.

Kolchak's world is a world of professional and mental frustration; as a reporter it is his job to make public anything newsworthy, from Chicago gangland murders to a remping zombie loose in the city's dark streets. However, when the gangland murders become linked with an actual zombie (as in *The Zombie* episode) frustration hits an all-time high.

Underworld crime, yeah, sure. The walking dead, nah, no way!

Kolchak's "monsters" are not depicted as grotesque, fire-breathing, bare-fanged creatures of shock. They are deliberately shadowy denizens of darkness, revealing themselves mostly in shadow — even to Kolchak who finally has to destroy them. In Jimmy Sengster's *Horror in the Heights* episode the "monster" shows itself mostly by taking on the form of a loved and trusted one. In *Demon in Lace* it appears as a lovely, young school teacher. In *The Youth Killer* it turns up as the girl of every men's dreams. In Kolchak's nightmare world nothing can be trusted to be what it initially appears. There is always a lurker on Kolchak's threshold which, despite all logical evidence, is usually passed off by his editor and the police as an over-active imagination. His is a one-man war against the forces of the supernatural which he *knows* are there, just waiting to surface and swarm over mankind. There are no cop-outs in his world of shadows and monsters — all the "impossibles" are real and have to be dealt with.

Kolchak: *The Night Stalker* was cancelled on American tv in early 1975, following various internal network problems, but even its 20-episode contribution to the genre is a significant mark to consider a re-viewing of the show, a re-evaluation of one of television's best fantasy-drama programmes.

At the time the series was on the cards for consideration by the ITV programme buyers (at least for the London area) but was finally rejected — probably in favour of something like *Happy Days* or *Barnaby Jones*.

On the note of genre tv retrospectives, *The Outer Limits* is not going to last forever. BBC-tv have screened most of the show's 49 episodes and when that finishes... well, what have we got? Maybe we'll get a showing of *Twilight Zone* or *One Step Beyond* or even something from the dreary world of Irwin Allen (and that's a frightening thought to begin with).

My banner-raising this time goes to Kolchak: *The Night Stalker*, which deserves an airing, which should demand an airing, which is half a decade overdue for an airing! Having read that the recently-shown feature film *The Glenn Miller Story* was screened due to a request, a demand from the public — why not the same for Kolchak: *The Night Stalker* series? BBC-tv appears to have the most sympathetic ear for such requests as well as a sense of tv history (witness the current slots for *Six of the Best*, *Sgt. Bilko*, etc) so they would seem to be the most likely candidates. If you want the Kolchak series scaring the pants off you every week on your tv set, let them know, write them! Write to: Mr Alan Howden, Head of Purchased Programmes, BBC Television, 302 Union House, Shepherds Bush Green, London W12.

# Philip José Farmer



**A**merican sf writer Philip José Farmer paid a rare visit to London in January, brought over his British publishers (Granada) to promote the long-awaited final novel of the Riverworld quartet, *The Magic Labyrinth* (£1.50). A signing session in the sf bookshop Forbidden Planet attested to Farmer's considerable popularity: in one afternoon 400 copies of *Magic Labyrinth* were snapped up by autograph-seeking fans, together with hundreds of copies of earlier titles. A few days later I went to meet Farmer in his comfortable London hotel to discuss his long and chequered career and, particularly, the hugely successful *Riverworld* series.

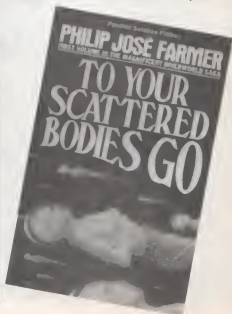
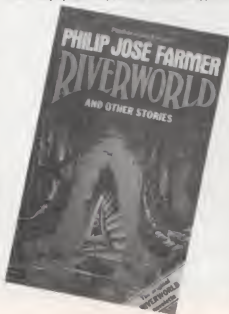
Farmer is a distinguished-looking man in his early sixties with neatly groomed white hair. You might at first glance mistake him for a bank manager or a lawyer. His voice at first does nothing to dispel his impression: he answers questions slowly and carefully. Then he laughs, and immediately you re-evaluate him. His laughter, lengthy and uninhibited, reveals a man who takes immense pleasure in discomfiting small, closed minds (an objective in which many of his books have been admirably successful). It would be hard not to like him.

Farmer's background is unremarkable. His upbringing was somewhat religious and puritanical. In consequence, perhaps unsurprisingly, he is neither, although religion remains an interest. "Although I long ago decided there wasn't any system of personal immortality, that

was a rational decision. I still can't keep from thinking about it, developing certain aspects of it in my books. I don't go to church; I do not believe the Bible is the literal word of God. I don't see how anybody who studies history of linguistics or any subject which arises from the study of the Bible *could* believe it. But I can't keep from dwelling on immortality, because I can't see that there's any purpose in our being here unless there is immortality. On the other hand, I'm not sure there is — I see no evidence for it."

It's quite logical that a writer who is intellectually an atheist but at the same time fascinated by the concept of personal immortality should use science fiction to resolve the paradox, and that's just what Farmer proceeded to do. His first venture into the field, however, was more conventional — or so it seems today. He is one of those rare and enviable writers who became famous with his first published story — in his case a novel, *The Lovers*, published in 1952. (To be strictly accurate, though, I should note that he published a single non-sf story some five years earlier.) *The Lovers* describes the romantic but ultimately tragic love affair between an Earthman and an alien "women" who turns out to be a kind of parasitic insect super-mimic. In 1981 it seems quite tame, even old-fashioned, but thirty years ago science fiction was a genre straight-jacketed by editorial prudery and *The Lovers* was explosive in its impact. It appeared in one of the less reputable magazines of the day because the major editors would have none of it — two of them, including the famous John W. Campbell, professed themselves nauseated by it.

A little later, Farmer heard of another opportunity. "In 1952 a small publishing house in Chicago, Shasta, and Pocket Books got together and initiated an International Fantasy Novel contest with a prize of 4000 dollars, which was a lot of money in those days. (As a matter of fact it's not bad now!)" Farmer wrote a novel titled *I owe for the Flesh*, sub-





mitted it, and won the contest. In the flush of this and other early successes he gave up his job in the steel mill where he had worked for 11½ years to become a full-time writer. But there were problems ahead. "Pocket Books put up most of the prize money. The publisher at Shasta had an idea for a book he thought would make a million, so he took the contest money and money he owed several other writers and sank it into the book . . . which bombed. As a result I didn't get paid. That was one bad thing about it: another was that he did not tell me that Pocket Books had not even gotten the manuscript. They were writing to him asking for it, and he made up a bunch of excuses; meantime he told me Pocket wanted a rewrite. This went on for a year. I spent most of my time rewriting the novel and as a result I didn't make much money from writing other stories. I couldn't support myself. Eventually I got an agent and I found out what was going on. Pocket Books were horrified and didn't want anything more to do with it. Shasta went bankrupt. That shattered my career so I took a job and wrote on the side — but not very much."

One problem with the novel was that it was 150,000 words long, and in the early 1950s there was very little demand for sf novels of any kind, let alone novels more than twice as long as the average. So Farmer put the typescript in the trunk and more-or-less forgot it for over a decade. It's interesting to speculate on what would have happened if *I Owe for the Flesh* had been published in the early Fifties, because it was the basis for what has, much later, become the *Riverworld* series. In a parallel world *The Magic Labyrinth*, far from being his latest novel, might have been part of his first!

fully simple, as are most good ideas. All of humanity is resurrected on the banks of a ten-million mile long river which is the only significant topographical feature of its planet. Why and how they are there are the mysteries which the novels unravel, and along the way Farmer has the happy task of bringing to life those characters from human history who most interest him: the explorer Richard Burton and Mark Twain rub shoulders with Hermann Goering and the brother of Baron von Richthofen. On the edge of the action is a character named Peter Jalrus Frigates, who shares Farmer's birthdate as well as his initials . . .

When Farmer eventually resurrected the novel he submitted it to Frederik Pohl, then editing a group of three magazines. "Fred Pohl sent it back, saying the idea was too big to put in even a 150,000 word novel. He suggested I break it into smaller units to be published in the magazines, and then put them together,

bridge the gaps, and publish them as a series of novels. Which I did, but only for the first two books. From then on I decided they'd be original novels."

How much of the original novel has survived into the published tetralogy? "The basic concept is the same and the make-up of the *Riverworld* planet is the same. I only used three or four of the original characters in the rewrite — Burton, Mark Twain, Joe Miller the cave-man, and von Richthofen's brother. A very few sections from the original appeared in the later novels, but mostly they were original, with new characters and new plot." What about the solution to the *Riverworld* mystery, as revealed in *Magic Labyrinth*? "Well, I'd like to say I haven't used the original conclusion, but I don't know as I don't have the original manuscript any more. During the course of the writing — which took quite a few years, as I was writing other novels in between — I had four or five alternate endings, and it wasn't until I was about halfway through *Magic Labyrinth* that I decided which ending I wanted."

Although the series which began with *To Your Scattered Bodies Go* is now complete, Farmer plans to return to the *Riverworld* in the future. "I want to write two sidesteam novels, which will be concerned with things I didn't have room for in the mainstream part. There are a lot of characters and concepts I'd like to develop more fully. How was their society formed, for instance? Also, in *Magic Labyrinth*, you might have noticed that in the last paragraph there's a tiny loophole, a lingering doubt. My wife said, don't do that to them! — but I couldn't resist it. Who knows, it may turn out that everything they were told at the end isn't true. I take the attitude that perhaps fiction isn't like life, but it should be, and real life never stops. Even if people die others take their place; the main problems still exist for other people. There never really is a complete ending."

The colour and adventure of the *Riverworld* series seem ideal for dramatization, so it's no surprise to learn that a production company, Jay Wolpert Productions, is about to secure the rights. "As a matter of fact, right now there's a contract waiting at home for me to sign. They want to make *To Your Scattered Bodies Go* into a feature film, or a pilot for a tv series, or both. Of course the fact that I sign the contract doesn't necessarily mean the movie will be made, but they seem to be very serious about it." Farmer's work hasn't previously been translated to the screen, although an option has been taken and renewed, amazingly enough, on *Image of the Beast*, one of a series of highly explicit erotic fantasies with which Farmer once again shocked the sf world in the late



1960s. There were also at one time plans to make a feature length animated movie of *Venus on the Half-Shell*, the novel Farmer wrote under the name Kilgore Trout — the fictional hack of writer who features in several Kurt Vonnegut novels. But although Farmer obtained his permission before writing the novel, Vonnegut soon became irritated at the publicity which accompanied its publication. It was widely assumed that Vonnegut, not Farmer, was the author. Many of the reviews berated him for writing it; still others said it was the best thing he'd ever done. Plans for the movie, therefore, had to be dropped, in the face of Vonnegut's probable wrath.

What does the future hold for Farmer? He has just delivered a new novel, *The Unreasonable Mask*, to his American publishers. He describes it as "a sort of theological, philosophical space opera. It has a concept, I think, that hasn't been used before." He hopes to start work this year on a non-sf novel. There are, as we've heard, further *Riverworld* books to write. Farmer has been a prolific writer — our short interview of necessity hardly mentioned the bulk of his three dozen or more novels. He is one of the few sf authors to establish a strong personal following, and one of the fewer still to become a genuine bestseller. There seems no danger of his fertile imagination drying up, and so one can only expect his success to continue to grow.





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# FRANKENSTEIN

In the first part of a three part series, *Starburst* regular Phil Edwards looks back at the first of the Boris Karloff *Frankenstein* films, made in 1931 for Universal. Later installments will examine *Bride of Frankenstein* (1935) and *Son of Frankenstein* (1939).

Following the success of Universal's filming of *Dracula* in 1930 the studio turned next to Mary Shelley's classic science-fiction horror novel *Frankenstein*.

*Frankenstein* had been previously filmed in 1910 by the Edison company with Charles Ogle portraying the monster and again in 1915 as *Life Without A Soul*, produced by Ocean Photoplays. In 1920 a version was made in Italy, *Il Mostro di Frakestein* (The Monster of Frankenstein), by Albertini Film-UCI.

Though *Frankenstein* had been produced in many versions on the stage, almost from the publication of the novel in 1816, it was Peggy Webling's 1927 adaptation which attracted the interest of Hollywood. The French born director, Robert Florey, interested Universal Pictures in the play as a new vehicle for Bela Lugosi who had become a star in Tod Browning's *Dracula*.

Universal announced their new horror project and went ahead taking trade advertisements featuring Lugosi as the monster. Florey shot a test reel of the Hungarian actor who portrayed the monster as a *Golem*-like shambler.

It was apparently Lugosi's florid theatrical style which decided Universal executives against the actor for the part of the monster. It was also reported that Lugosi was pleased to be out of the production. He would eventually play the monster in 1943 in Universal's first monster rally, *Frankenstein Meets the Wolfman*.

With Lugosi off the project Robert Florey also left. In 1932 the two would film one of the strangest of the 30s horror thrillers, *The Murders in the Rue Morgue*, a film much more suited for their outrageous styles than *Frankenstein*.

Universal decided that *Frankenstein* required unique directorial handling for the then-controversial subject matter of the story. They handed the project to Englishman James Whale who had become famous for his theatrical production of R.C. Sheriff's anti-war play *Journey's End*.

Whale had come to Hollywood to direct the film version of the famous play



and had stayed on to film the romantic drama *Waterloo Bridge*. Along with Florey's script he inherited the leading player for *Frankenstein*, Leslie Howard who had made such a hit in his *Journey's End*. Clive proved a brilliant stroke of casting and it is now difficult to think of another actor playing the eye-rolling, demented scientist.

The difficult job of casting the monster remained. In the issue of *The Saturday Evening Post* for November 3, 1962 Boris Karloff recalled in an article, *Memoirs of a Monster*, how he was chosen for the role. While eating lunch in the studio canteen he received a note to say that James Whale wanted to see him at his table. When Karloff went to see Whale the director complimented him on his performance in a theatrical

Right: *Dr Henry Frankenstein* (Colin Clive) tries to establish some control over his creation (Boris Karloff). Below: Fritz (Dwight Frye) watches suspiciously as Dr Waldman (Edward Van Sloan), Victor Morris (John Boles) and *Frankenstein's* fiancée Elizabeth (Mae Clark) pay a surprise visit on *Frankenstein*. Bottom: Dr Waldman and Victor Morris try to subdue *Frankenstein*. Fritz watches sulkily in the background. Opposite page. Top: Jack Pierce (left) and an assistant go to work on Boris Karloff. Centre left: An unused design for the Monster. The forehead clasps were deleted for the film. Centre right: The makeup as it finally appeared. Bottom: Dr Waldman attempts to put a stop to the Monster's rampeging.



production of *The Criminal Code*, which Karloff had also filmed in 1930 for Columbia Pictures.

The British born actor had been on the stage since 1910 and in films from 1919, usually playing heavies. It was Karloff's ability to bring a touch of sympathy to his villainous roles which attracted Whale, as well as his six-foot-plus height and gaunt features. At first Karloff was unsure. The part of the monster had no dialogue and he would be all but unrecognisable under the heavy make-up required for the role. But on reflection he realised that the part of the *Frankenstein* monster could bring him the kind of recognition which Lugosi had received for his portrayal of *Dracula*.

Whale then turned Karloff over to make-up artist Jack Pierce. Pierce, like Karloff, had started his career in 1910, though as a projectionist. After being a theatre manager and then an assistant cameraman Pierce had become a make-up artist. He went on to create many brilliant make-up jobs for the Universal horror films, perhaps his most extraordinary being the work he did on Karloff for *The Mummy* in 1932.

The creation of the look of the *Frankenstein* monster can be attributed to both Pierce and Karloff. It was Pierce who designed the square head and scars running along the front of the scalp, the metal clasps on the forehead, the roughly stitched hands and of course the famous electrodes in the neck. Along with built-up boots weighing twelve pounds each, Karloff wore a heavy metal brace on his





is unrelenting. It is a series of astonishing scenes: the opening graveyard sequence; the hanged men at the crossroads; the birth of the monster amid Kenneth Strickfadden's sparkling electrical effects; the chase by torch-bearing villagers through the obviously fake plaster rocks of a Universal soundstage; the taunting of the monster by Fritz and the creature's grisly revenge; the murder of Professor Waldman (*Edward Van Sloan*) and the final confrontation between the Monster and Frankenstein in the burning windmill. Perhaps the most extraordinary scene is the introduction of Kerloff's monster. A door opens and the monster backs in and slowly turns. In a series of short takes Whale brings his camera closer and closer to the haunted face of Frankenstein's sad creation. It is one of

spine which further impaired his natural movements and gave him the shambling gait which was to become the trade mark of the monster. So it looked like the monster make-up was complete, but there was something about the finished effect which worried Kerloff. It was the eyes. They are simply too aware and alive for a being who has supposedly been built from the flesh of the dead. Kerloff suggested to Pierce that what the monster needed was the heavy, hooded look of death. Pierce fashioned thick false eyelids of putty, affixed them to Kerloff's own eyelids and the monster was complete. The final makeup took four hours to apply every morning of filming and was built up in the layers of grease paint and cotton that were used before the introduction of latex appliances of today.

The film story of *Frankenstein* was vastly different to Mary Shelley's original novel. In the book the monster had been an articulate creature, more driven to acts of violence through misunderstanding and rejection by his creator. For the film scenario, based on the Webbing play, the monster acts as he does because of the use of a criminal brain chosen by Fritz (*Dwight Frye*), Frankenstein's crazed and sadistic hunchbacked assistant.

Seen today, *Frankenstein* has a simplicity of form and style which marks it as a classic of cinema, unlike the wordy and theatrical *Dracula* of Lugosi and Tod Browning. The film has a bleakness, which apart from a little comic relief during the preparations for Frankenstein's wedding to Elizebeth (*Mae Clark*),



the magic moments of fantasy cinema.

The most famous sequence in *Frankenstein* is one which most people have never seen, other than in the form of photographs. It is of course the drowning of a little girl by the monster. The creature, escaped from his creator, comes upon a small girl sitting by a lake. She is throwing flowers into the water and watching them float away. The monster sits beside the girl who, through her innocence, doesn't see his physical ugliness. Karloff joins in the game, smiling grotesquely. Suddenly the flowers are all gone and the monster, frustrated, turns to the child. Hoping that she too will float so beautifully picks her up and throws her in.

Before the film's release, Karloff objected to the sequence and James



Whale respecting his point of view deleted the scene. In an interview in *Castle of Frankenstein* magazine in 1966 Karloff explained his objection to the sequence:

"My conception of the scene was that he would look up at the little girl in bewilderment, and, in his mind, she would become a flower. Without moving, he would pick her up gently and put her in the water exactly as she had done to the flower, and to his horror she would sink. Well Jimmy (Whale) made me pick her up and to THAT (motions violently) over my head which became a brutal and deliberate act. By no stretch of the imagination could you make that innocent. The whole pathos of the scene, to my mind, should have been completely innocent and unaware. But the moment you do that it's a deliberate thing and I insisted on that part being taken out."

*Frankenstein* proved an enormous hit and was often double-billed with *Dracula* throughout the 30s and 40s. It made an international star of Karloff and spawned a whole series of sequels, though they rapidly declined in quality after Karloff played the monster for the third and last time in 1939 in *Son Of Frankenstein*. It was *Frankenstein*, which as *Curse of Frankenstein*, gave the small English production company Hammer Films a new lease of life in 1957. It gave cinema an unending source of material and ideas which, innovative in the 1931 production, became staple horror film formulas.

Film makers as diverse as Andy Warhol and Mel Brooks have filmed the *Frankenstein* saga and even now it has been announced that Canada's King of Horror, David Cronenberg, is to make yet another version of Mary Shelley's classic novel.

Throughout this short series we'll look at the other Karloff versions of Mary Shelley's creation. But like King Kong the original remains the best.



Top: Henry Frankenstein (Colin Clive) and the Monster (Boris Karloff) grapple at the top of the burning windmill in the climax of the film. Above: The Monster peers through the undergrowth at the figure of the little girl (Marilyn Harris) who is throwing flower petals in the lake.

Universal zeigt:

BORIS KARLOFF

# Frankenstein

COLIN CLIVE  
MAE CLARKE  
JOHN BOLES  
DIRECTED BY  
JAMES WHALE



**STARBURST**

FANTASY MALE PHENOM

CHRIS REEVE as  
'SUPERMAN'

